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Japan

Kaifu Calls Bush, Confirms Support on Deadline

OW2302143991 Tokyo KYODO in English 1422 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Excerpt] Tokyo, Feb. 23 KYODO—Five hours before the allies' deadline for Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait, U.S. President George Bush said he is not optimistic, but has not given up hope, a Japanese official said Saturday. Bush made the remarks in a 15-minute telephone conversation with Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu, the Foreign Ministry official said. The official said Kaifu called Bush at his Camp David presidential retreat in Maryland as a show of solidarity as the U.S. deadline for Iraq's withdrawal approaches. Washington is demanding that Iraq start pulling its troops out of Kuwait by 1700 GMT Saturday (2 A.M. Sunday Japan time).

Kaifu said that it is important that Iraqi President Saddam Husayn immediately and unconditionally pulls out of Kuwait, the official said.

"I basically support your decision," Kaifu was quoted saying.

He said that to avoid a human tragedy Husayn must heed U.S. demands and act as soon as possible.

The U.S. has also received support for its ultimatum, announced early Saturday morning Japan time, from European allies in the multinational forces fighting in the Persian Gulf.

The Foreign Ministry official would not confirm or deny whether the two leaders discussed the ground war, and said he could not reveal further details of the conversation.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Misoji Sakamoto told reporters that Japan will support allied forces if a ground offensive begins.

Kaifu conveyed Japan's support to Bush after chairing a meeting of senior government officials to reaffirm support for the actions of the U.S.-led multinational forces, government officials said. The government agreed that Iraq's unconditional and immediate withdrawal in line with U.N. Security Council resolutions is the key to a fair settlement of the war, and decided to demand a definite decision from Iraq, the officials said. [passage omitted]

Supports Ground War

OW2402042291 Tokyo KYODO in English 0411 GMT 24 Feb 91

[Text] Tokyo, Feb. 24 KYODO—Japanese Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu said Sunday the start of the Persian Gulf ground war is "very regrettable," and said he hopes the fighting will end as soon as possible.

Asked if Japan supports the ground attack launched Sunday morning Japan time, Kaifu suggested that the military action was unavoidable.

"Yesterday I spoke with both U.S. President (George) Bush and Soviet President (Mikhail) Gorbachev, but the final efforts were not accepted" by Iraq, Kaifu said. The prime minister was speaking to reporters on his way to a ceremony at the Imperial Palace marking Saturday's proclamation of Crown Prince Naruhito as heir to the Chrysanthemum Throne.

Kaifu told Bush in a phone conversation hours before the Allied ultimatum ran out at noon Saturday in Washington (2 A.M. Sunday Japan time) that he "basically supports" the U.S. demand for Iraq's immediate and unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait.

Meanwhile, the Foreign Ministry repeated Japan's support for Allied military actions to free Kuwait from Iraqi occupation.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Taizo Watanabe said that the Allied forces had begun a ground offensive, and Japan thought it was extremely regrettable due to Iraq's stubborn refusal to leave Kuwait despite dissuasion by many countries.

The Japanese Government continued to firmly support the coalition activities to eject Iraqi forces and to restore peace in the Persian Gulf area based on U.N. resolutions, the statement said.

Japan hopes the battle will end as soon as possible with the achievement of the resolutions, it said.

Japan has continued to ask Baghdad to begin withdrawing from the Emirate by accepting U.N. Security Council resolutions in the hope that combat will cease as quickly as possible to ensure casualties are at a minimum, the statement said.

Officials Discuss Ground War, Aid in Diet

Kaifu Calls for Support

OW2502130991 Tokyo KYODO in English 1228 GMT 25 Feb 91

[Text] Tokyo, Feb. 25 KYODO—Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu indicated Monday that he supports the initiation of a land war by the multinational forces in the Persian Gulf war to drive Iraq from Kuwait.

Kaifu was speaking at a plenary session of the Diet's House of Representatives during debate on Japan's 9 billion dollar pledge to the 28-nation coalition, formally proposed to the lower chamber the same day by Finance Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto.

"Beginning with (U.S. President George Bush), we have a difficult decision to make in which we must protect the ideals of righteousness and peace in international society," said Kaifu, throwing his unconditional support behind the coalition.

"As politicians, we must express our solidarity and support for the decision," he said.

Kaifu warned that if the Japanese Government were unable to provide the support it has promised the allies, Japan's international credibility would be seriously hurt.

The prime minister said the Japanese reaction has been "unsatisfactory," and called for a firm response, adding that a "non-committal resolution would cause confusion."

Regarding Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's peace proposal, which was accepted by Iraq but rebuffed by the allies, Kaifu said voiding the United Nations resolutions on the crisis in exchange for an Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait is not the solution desired by international society.

Hashimoto presented to the lower house the second supplementary budget for fiscal 1990 and the revised budget for fiscal 1991, which includes Japan's pledge to the war effort.

Hashimoto called for sharing the financial burden of the multinational coalition fighting against Iraqi President Saddam Husayn's forces.

Asked about future Japanese contributions to the U.S.-led coalition, Kaifu said he was not considering any, but that would depend upon changes in the Gulf situation.

Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Taro Nakayama reaffirmed the government's position that Iraq must unconditionally withdraw from Kuwait and that the legitimate government there must be restored.

Responding to Social Democratic Party legislator Koken Nosaka's implication that Japan is seeking Husayn's overthrow, Nakayama reiterated that Japan would consider the U.N. resolutions on the Gulf crisis implemented if Iraq withdraws and the Kuwaiti Government is reinstated, denying that the overthrow of Husayn is an objective.

Nakayama also said he did not think Bush's rejection of the Gorbachev proposal put U.S.-Soviet relations in danger, pointing out that negotiations on a number of topics are currently under way between the superpowers and that it appears to be business as usual.

Shigeru Ito, policy chief of the SDP, called for the cancellation of the 9 billion dollar Japanese pledge if the bulk of the money would go to the U.S. military, saying that the money should be used for "positive planning" such as restoration and overseeing a ceasefire and peace.

Japanese Communist Party member Seiji Masamori demanded the government give up on its plans for aid to the allied forces and to dispatch Self-Defense Forces [SDF] aircraft to the Middle East on refugee evacuation missions.

Meanwhile, the leader of a civic group opposed to the dispatch of the SDF overseas turned in a petition with 10,000 signatures to the prime minister's office, demanding a ceasefire and opposing aid to the United States.

Mitsuko Niimi, head of the Badge Society, said: "The U.S. has wanted this ground war all along. We want to veto this war which will be completed at the sacrifice of all of us."

Home Affairs Minister Akira Fukida, in what he called his private opinion, told a press conference that he would like to see the war front limited to the area around Kuwait after Iraqi troops are forced out.

"I think extending as far as the vicinity of al-Basra is a good idea, but we must avoid scorching all of Iraq," said Fukida.

Finance Minister on Burden-Sharing

OW2502045491 Tokyo KYODO in English 0418 GMT 25 Feb 91

[Text] Tokyo, Feb. 25 KYODO—Finance Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto, speaking before the Diet on Monday, called on the Japanese to share the burden of the nation's financial contribution to the U.S.-led allied forces fighting Iraq in the Persian Gulf.

Hashimoto said the government "will do its best" to obtain the necessary funds through cutting expenditures, but the shortfall must be met by levying of temporary taxes.

He was speaking before the plenary session of the House of Representatives, which opened at 1 p.m. to discuss the second supplementary budget for fiscal 1990 and the revised fiscal 1991 budget containing the 9 billion dollar contribution to the coalition forces. Fiscal 1991 begins on April 1.

He said considering Japan's role in international society, the contribution is a national responsibility, which must be carried out in an active manner.

The government had earlier promised to contribute an additional 9 billion dollars to the allied forces, estimated to be about 1.19 trillion yen, bringing to 11 billion dollars the total amount of Japanese contribituions pledged so far in support of the Gulf war.

The ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) decided on February 15 to raise 500 billion yen from nontax revenue in fiscal 1990 and by cutting expenses in fiscal 1991, changing their initial plan of extracting the total amount through higher corporate, petroleum, and cigarette taxes and issuing short-term government bonds.

With earlier approval by two centrist opposition parties—Komeito and the Democratic Socialist Party—the supplementary budget is expected to pass the Diet in March, before the end of the current fiscal year.

Komeito holds the swing votes in the House of Councillors, or the upper house, where the LDP does not have a majority.

Cabinet Reaffirms Support for Actions in Gulf

OW2302112691 Tokyo KYODO in English 1116 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Text] Tokyo, Feb. 23 KYODO—The Japanese Government on Saturday reaffirmed its position that calls for Iraq's immediate, unconditional and complete withdrawal from Kuwait, and supports the actions of the U.S.-led multinational forces, government officials said.

The government reaffirmed the policy at a meeting attended by Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu and 14 cabinet ministers, including Foreign Minister Taro Nakayama and Finance Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto.

Kaifu will telephone U.S. President George Bush on Saturday night to convey this policy, the officials said.

Nakayama briefed ministers on recent developments in the Persian Gulf war.

The ministers agreed the six-point peace plan put forward by Iraq and the Soviet Union is insufficient because various conditions were attached. But they said some progress had been made.

The government agreed that Iraq's unconditional and immediate withdrawal from Kuwait in line with U.N. Security Council resolutions is the key to a fair settlement of the war, and decided to demand a definite decision from Iraq, the officials said.

Japan's Ambassador to the United Nations Yoshio Hatano will call on Iraqi diplomats in New York and U.N. Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar to make further peace efforts.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Misoji Sakamoto told reporters the ministers did not discuss the prospect of a possible land war, but that Japan will support allied forces if a ground offensive begins.

Cabinet Secretary Supports Ground War

OW2402093891 Tokyo KYODO in English 0922 GMT 24 Feb 91

[Text] Tokyo, Feb. 24 KYODO—Japan offered unwavering support Sunday for the Allied ground offensive to drive Iraqi forces out of Kuwait, even if the operation requires incursion into Iraqi territory, the top government spokesman said.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Misoji Sakamoto, however, rejected the suggestion that it might be necessary to unseat Iraqi President Saddam Husayn in order to free Kuwait.

"The overthrow of Iraqi President Husayn is not written into the United Nations Security Council resolutions," he told reporters.

Reading from a prepared statement, Sakamoto said that Iraq's refusal to comply with a U.S. ultimatum to leave Kuwait and to comply with all U.N. resolutions, is extremely regrettable.

"Japan continues its strong support for the action of the multinational forces," Sakamoto said after a meeting of the cabinet-level Persian Gulf crisis task force, headed by Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu.

The ground war was necessary, he said, to "restore peace and justice."

Sakamoto said Japan hoped for complete implementation of the 12 United Nations Security Council resolutions to make possible an early end to the fighting.

He reiterated Japan would not participate militarily in the Gulf war, but would continue to make contribuitions within the allowances of the war-renouncing Constitution.

He said the 16-member task force did not discuss the possible need for additional funds for the U.S.-led multinational forces beyond the 11 billion dollars pledged so far.

The cabinet reviewed developments to date, but did not discuss prospects for how long the fighting would last, or post-war scenarios, he said.

"Nothing is clear at this point," Sakamoto said.

Sakamoto signalled that Japan is not opposed to military action spilling into Iraqi territory.

"If it is judged that (entering Iraq) is necessary to restore peace (in Kuwait,) it will have to be accepted," Sakamoto said.

"That will be determined on a case-by-case basis," he added. Military analysts have said forces might enter Iraq to cut off the occupation army in Kuwait.

Sakamoto said Japan is concerned about reports that Iraq is destroying oil production facilities, and said reports of slaughter of Kuwaitis were "regrettable," and unacceptable by international opinion.

In a separate press conference, Foreign Minister Taro Nakayama said Japan, which is barred by its Constitution from playing a military role overseas, has "limited" options on how to help the Allied war effort.

He said the government plans to expedite action in extending 9 bilion dollars in additional aid to the Allies, give more help in the evacuation of war refugees, and help counter environmental damage caused by the war.

He said, however, that Tokyo has not yet received requests from international relief agencies for additional help in evacuating refugees.

Asked if the government still plans to use military aircraft to transport refugees, Nakayama said commercial planes would be used first and the government would then consider using Air Self-Defense Force transport aircraft if warranted.

Foreign Minstry Officials Support Gulf War

Nakayama Calls Baker

OW2202160791 Tokyo KYODO in English 1557 GMT 22 Feb 91

[Excerpts] Tokyo, Feb. 23 KYODO—Japan on Friday reaffirmed its backing for the U.S.-led allied military actions aimed at enforcing U.N. resolutions against Iraq. Foreign Minister Taro Nakayama gave Japan's renewed pledge in a 15-minute telephone call to U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, a Foreign Ministry official said. Nakayama was quoted as assuring Baker of Japan's firm support for the allied actions in the Persian Gulf war to force Iraq out of Kuwait.

Baker, who received the call while conferring with President George Bush at the Oval Office, said the Soviet peace plan persuading Iraq into leaving Kuwait has a big problem, the Foreign Ministry officials said.

The secretary noted also the importance of the international community maintaining solidarity on the issue, the official said. [passage omitted]

Nakayama, thanking Baker for keeping Japan well informed through diplomatic channels, said Japan thinks it of primary necessity to implement the U.N. Security Council resolutions on Iraq. But Nakayama also noted that it would be beneficial for the U.S. to handle the Soviet peace plan carefully. [passage omitted]

Watanabe Backs Bush Statement

OW2202171391 Tokyo KYODO in English 1704 GMT 22 Feb 91

[Excerpt] Tokyo, Feb. 23 KYODO—Japan supports the ultimatum U.S. President George Bush made Friday that Iraq must begin its unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait by noon Saturday, a senior Foreign Ministry said early Saturday.

Makoto Watanabe, head of the ministry's Middle East and African Affairs Bureau, told reporters Japan backs the U.S. ultimatium as it reflects the strong determination of the allied forces and other members of the international community to enforce the U.N. Security Council resolutions against Iraq.

He said the Japanese Government hopes Iraq will immediately begin leaving the emirate it conquered August 2. [passage omitted]

Nakayama Talks to Iraqi, U.S. Envoys

OW2302075191 Tokyo KYODO in English 0740 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Text] Tokyo, Feb. 23 KYODO—Foreign Minister Taro Nakayama called on Iraqi Ambassador to Japan Rashid al-Rifa'i on Saturday to accept U.S. President George Bush's ultimatum demanding the start of an immediate and unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait by Saturday noon eastern standard time, officials said.

Nakayama summoned Al-Rifa'i and told him Iraq's immediate and unconditional pullout from Kuwait in line with United Nations Security Council resolutions would settle the Persian Gulf war.

Nakayama urged the Iraqi ambassador to inform his country that the Iraqi Government should not negotiate but withdraw.

The ambassador replied that he will convey Nakayama's message, that diplomatic efforts to resolve the crisis are being made in Moscow, and that Iraq cooperates with the Soviet Union and the U.N. Security Council.

Nakayama also demanded Iraq immediately stop setting oil wells in Kuwait on fire, saying it would cause serious global environmental problems.

Al-Rifa'i denied Bush's allegation that Iraqi troops are destroying the entire oil production facilities in Kuwait and said U.S. air raids were causing this destruction.

Meanwhile, Nakayama told U.S. Ambassador to Japan Michael Armacost that Japan supports the U.S. stance on the Gulf war, officials said.

Armacost visited Nakayama to brief him on U.S. Gulf policy and said it is important for Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait unconditionally and completely in accordance with U.N. resolutions and that Iraq should respond to President George Bush's Friday statement.

Nakayama said Japan basically supports U.S. policy and that Japan and the United States should keep in close contact on the issue in the future.

Armacost expressed his appreciation for Japan's support, the officials said.

Nakayama Receives Call From Baker

OW2402061191 Tokyo KYODO in English 0558 GMT 24 Feb 91

[Text] Tokyo, Feb. 24 KYODO—U.S. Secretary of State James Baker on Sunday called Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Nakayama and expressed thanks for Japan's backing of Allied action in the Persian Gulf, a Japanese Foreign Ministry official said.

Baker notified Nakayama that the U.S.-led coalition launched a land offensive against Iraq at 8 P.M. EST (0100 GMT).

Nakayama assured Baker of Japan's support of the U.S. actions in the five-minute call beginning at 1:45 P.M. Japan time.

When Nakayama expressed hope that the Allies achieve their goal as quickly as possible, Baker said he was not sure what will become of the ground war, the ministry official said in a briefing to reporters.

Meanwhile, U.S. Undersecretary of State Robert Kimmitt reported on the commencement of the ground campaign to free Kuwait when he had dinner with Japanese Ambassador to Washington Ryohei Murata, the official said.

Poll Shows Majority Support for Ground Offensive

OW2302182191 Tokyo KYODO in English 1619 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Text] Tokyo, Feb. 23 KYODO—A majority of Japanese polled on Saturday said they support a U.S.-led ground assault against Iraq if it fails to withdraw from Kuwait by noon Saturday, Eastern Standard Time (2 a.m. Sunday Japan time), an NHK survey said.

Sixty-one percent of voters surveyed in the telephone survey said they support the allied ultimatum for Iraqi troops to quit Kuwait or face a certain ground war, while 37 percent said they opposed it.

NHK, or Japan Broadcasting Corp., asked 1,800 persons to participate in the poll, conducted about five hours before the U.S. deadline, and 920 agreed.

The national television station did not provide the margin of error.

The poll also showed that a solid majority of voters, 70 percent, support Japan's recent 9 billion dollar pledge to the U.S.-led multinational forces in the Persian Gulf, with 28 percent opposed.

Over half the respondents, 56 percent, favored Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu's plan to dispatch Air Self-Defense Force C-130 transport planes to the Middle East to help evacuate refugees if international relief organizations so request.

The plan has been strongly opposed in parliament by opposition parties who fear it could violate Japan's war-renouncing constitution and pave the way for wider international military activities.

So far Japan has not received any request for the military aircraft for refugee evacuation.

The poll showed 81 percent of respondents want Japan to dispatch personnel to help resolve international conflicts, but only 10 percent would support the dispatch of military personnel.

Asked about Japan's contribution to international efforts in the Gulf, only 45 percent said Japan was making a substantial contribution.

Forty-seven percent said that Japan is not contributing much, while 8 percent said Japan is not contributing at all.

So far Japan has pledged a total of 11 billion dollars to the multinational forces, and an additional 2 billion dollars in economic assistance, primarily for Egypt, Jordan, and Turkey.

Antiwar Rallies, Demonstrations Held in Tokyo

OW2402133591 Tokyo KYODO in English 1308 GMT 24 Feb 91

[Text] Tokyo, Feb. 24 KYODO—Antiwar activists, high school students, and musicians Sunday staged rallies, demonstrations, and concerts in Tokyo and Yokosuka to protest the Persian Gulf war.

Nearly 200 folk singers, jazz musicians, and classical music players held a peace concert at the Hibiya Public Hall in central Tokyo, singing their opposition to the war. More than 1,000 people packed the hall.

At the Yoyogi Park in Tokyo, some 500 citizens rallied against the war and appealed for an immediate end to the fighting between Iraq and the U.S-led Allied forces. On a street near the gathering, about 20 high school students performed a short play against the war.

In Yokosuka, south of Tokyo, about 40 members of a antinuclear civic group staged a protest rally outside the U.S. naval base there.

In front of the main gate of the base, demonstrators chanted slogans in English protesting the ground war being waged by the coalition forces against Iraq.

Iraqi Envoy Says Over 10,000 Killed, Wounded

OW2502113591 Tokyo KYODO in English 1114 GMT 25 Feb 91

[Text] Tokyo, Feb. 25 KYODO—Over 10,000 Iraqis, including civilians, have been killed or wounded since the U.S.-led allied forces launched air strikes on January 17, Iraqi Ambassador to Japan Rashid al-Rifa'i said on Monday.

But the Iraqi armed forces were also inflicting huge casualties on the allied forces, who will be totally defeated in a few days, al-Rifa'i said.

Al-Rifa'i told reporters the multinational forces have extended their strikes even to villages and nomadic Bedouin communities in Iraq.

If allied forces advance into Iraq, they will be dragged into a guerrilla war and street-to-street fighting, the Iraqi ambassador said.

Kuwait Envoy Comments on Iraqi Proposals

OW2202182291 Tokyo NHK General Television Network in Japanese 1210 GMT 22 Feb 91

[Report on interview with Kuwait Ambassador to Japan 'Abd al-Aziz al-Sharikh by Hatsuhisa Takashima; date, place not given; from the "NHK News 21" program—recorded in English with Japanese translation provided by subtitles; following from English]

[Text] [Al-Sharikh] I will give you an example why it is logical for us to be very insistent on the 12 resolutions. Because, for instance, if Iraqis accepted the Resolution 660, which talks about withdrawal, but not accept 662, which talks about the illegality of Iraqi annexation of Kuwait, that means that their withdrawal would have no legal meaning. So, in order to have legal meaning for their withdrawal, they have to clearly announce their acceptance of all the resolutions and especially 662, which is the instrument by which the Security Council verified the Iraqi unilateral decision to annex the state of Kuwait.

So, we have to be very careful, especially when you deal with a person like Saddam Husayn. One of the things you name is that you have to be especially careful and very, very cautious.

[Takashima] One of the Soviet officials revealed this morning in Japan time that the understanding or agreement between Iraq and the Soviet Union covers not only the eight points, which were revealed or announced from the official spokesman.

[Al-Sharikh] Well, let us appreciate something that is very important. Even if it sounds [word indistinct] a bit technical but it is in fact a matter of principle. And, that is the fact that the fate of UN resolutions is the sole responsibility of the Security Council alone. No country, big or small, cannot [as heard] unilaterally repeal or shift or change the letters of spirit of the UN resolutions.

So, if the Iraqis are really sincere in their acceptance of the international will, then they should simply declare their acceptance of all of the 12 UN resolutions. This I think will constitute a real breakthrough.

This is not to say that I am commenting on the development during the last hours because I said I do not have any official comment to make about the Soviet proposals and Iraqi response to it. But, I am telling you my personal views about the inadmissibility of toying with [word indistinct]. Nobody can toy with the resolutions. They are made to be implemented and to be respected.

[Takashima] Talking about Saddam Husayn, would it be acceptable for the Kuwaiti Government and also for the people in Kuwait to see President Saddam Husayn still keeps his power even after the cease-fire and withdrawal?

[Al-Sharikh] Well, I am compelled to tell you that the business of maintaining Saddam Husayn or [word indistinct] Saddam Husayn is the sole business of the people of Iraq, of course. But, if you ask me whether I, as a Kuwaiti citizen, will feel secure or comfortable after what we have seen from Saddam Husayn and his soldiers—I mean [word indistinct] that have been committed against my people—do not allow any Kuwaiti to feel security with Saddam Husayn around. But, here again, I have to repeat that the ultimate fate of Saddam Husayn is the sole business of our brothers; the people of Iraq.

Government, Industry Comment on Oil Supplies

MITI Expects No Effect From Fires

OW2302042091 Tokyo KYODO in English 0347 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Text] Tokyo, Feb. 23 KYODO—Japan's oil supply will not be affected by Iraq's move to set fire to Kuwaiti oil installations, a Ministry of International Trade and Industry official said Saturday.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said that there will be no problem with domestic oil supply for the time being, as no oil has been imported from Kuwait since last August when the Gulf crisis began with Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.

Japan has made up for oil lost from Kuwait and Iraq by purchasing more from other Persian Gulf nations such as Iran, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia.

Despite an August ban on oil and oil products from Iraq and Kuwait, Japan's oil imports have risen in recent months. In January, imports posted a 2.7 percent gain on a year-to-year basis.

Industry Sees 'Little' Change

OW2402043491 Tokyo KYODO in English 0420 GMT 24 Feb 91

[Text] Tokyo, Feb. 24 KYODO—Reacting calmly to the outbreak of a ground war in the Persian Gulf, oil industry sources said Sunday the international oil supply-demand situation will change little at least for the time being.

"The Gulf war's escalation into a ground battle had been expected," said an official at Nippon Oil Co.

Yasuoki Takeuchi, chairman of the Petroleum Association of Japan, said, "In the short term, crude oil and petroleum product prices will rise."

In the long term, however, the international oil situation will not change drastically as long as crude and petroleum product production facilities in Saudi Arabia remain undamaged, Takeuchi said. "Nor will crude prices surge ahead," he added.

Since the outbreak of the Persian Gulf war last month, Saudi Arabia has boosted oil production substantially to make up for a shortage in oil supply from Iran and Kuwait.

Industry analysts also cited slower demand for oil in the months ahead due to seasonal factors and a recession in the United States as reasons for their optimism.

But, an official with Nissho Iwai Corp., a major trading house, warned the Gulf war will have a serious impact on the oil supply-demand balance if oil wells and refineries in Kuwait and Iraq are badly damaged.

Industry analysts said prices of petroleum products such as jet fuel oil and gas oil may rise because these products are expected to be consumed in massive amounts in the ground war.

Price, Supply Monitoring To Continue

OW2402074791 Tokyo KYODO in English 0716 GMT 24 Feb 91

[Text] Tokyo, Feb. 24 KYODO—The Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) will continue efforts to ensure a stable supply of oil while closely monitoring prices of petroleum products and other essential items, MITI officials said Sunday.

The officials were commenting on the outbreak of a ground war in the Persian Gulf earlier in the day.

MITI officials believe, however, Japan's oil supply situation will be little affected for a while, since main oil loading ports in Saudi Arabia have been free from damage since the start of the Gulf war last month.

"The ground battle appears not likely to lead to the closure of the Strait of Hormuz in the immediate future," said one official. The strait is vital as Middle Eastern crude oil is supplied to the rest of the world almost entirely through it.

Middle Eastern crude oil accounts for about 70 percent of Japan's overall oil imports.

On January 17, the government decided to reduce private-sector oil reserve requirements from 82 days' supply to 78 days' as a temporary measure for up to the end of February in line with an emergency program worked out by the 21-nation international energy agency.

In order to make more oil available on the market, Japanese oil firms have since been drawing from their own reserves. But they are unlikely to increase the amount from March, expecting an easing in the international oil supply-demand situation.

If oil wells and refineries in Kuwait and former demilitarized zones come to a complete halt due to Iraq's "scorched earth" policy and the ground battle, Japan will be unable to secure an adequate supply of petroleum products, industry analysts say.

In fact, MITI is planning to permit domestic oil firms to boost the capacity of secondary refining facilities for production of kerosene and other petroleum products.

Officials React to Military Coup in Thailand

Unlikely To Affect Ties

OW2302103891 Tokyo KYODO in English 1031 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Text] Tokyo, Feb. 23 KYODO—The military coup in Thailand on Saturday is not likely to affect Tokyo-Bangkok ties, a Foreign Ministry official said.

The relationship between the two countries is mature and stable, politically and economically, the official said.

The official also said the Japanese Embassy in Bangkok reported calm in districts near the embassy compound in the city center.

Another ministry official said there have been no reports that the airport or other key transportation installations in Thailand are under military occupation.

The Japanese Embassy is making telephone contacts with Japanese nationals to urge them to stay calm and act with care. There are 14,300 Japanese in Thailand.

Aid To Continue

OW2402125191 Tokyo KYODO in English 1238 GMT 24 Feb 91

[Excerpts] Tokyo, Feb. 24 KYODO—Japan, Thailand's leading source of foreign aid, is not likely to follow the United States in suspending economic assistance to Bangkok in the wake of Saturday's military coup that toppled Prime Minister Chatchai Chunhawan, a Foreign Ministry source said Sunday.

Japan, whose 488.8 million dollars of economic assistance accounted for 70 percent of Thailand's bilateral aid in 1989, would have little reason to cut its close economic ties with that country unless the political situation there deteriorates further, the source said. [passage omitted]

Although Japan is the top economic aid donor to Thailand, the U.S. provides by far the most military aid to the country, the source said.

Despite Tokyo's apparent decision to continue aid, Foreign Ministry spokesman Taizo Watanabe urged the coup leaders to swiftly shift power to a civilian government as they have pledged. The military junta promised Sunday to hold a general election within six months.

Watanabe said the Japanese Government was surprised by the coup and hopes it will not harm bilateral relations. He said in a statement that Japan expects Thailand to continue playing a constructive role in solving the Cambodian conflict.

Spokesman Says Ties 'Unchanged'

OW2502052391 Tokyo KYODO in English 0437 GMT 25 Feb 91

[Text] Tokyo, Feb. 25 KYODO—Japan's top government spokesman said Monday the military coup d'etat in Thailand last Saturday will not affect bilateral relations.

Asked whether Japan's economic assistance program should be suspended following the army's overthrow of the elected government to reflect Japan's stated policy of promoting democracy, Chief Cabinet Secretary Misoji Sakamoto replied that the coup was different in character from "typical" coups.

"There have been 17 coups in Thailand up till now, but they have not been accompanied by bloodshed, and in the end peace is restored," he said.

No shots were fired in Saturday's overthrow of Prime Minister Chatchai Chunhawan, which military leaders said was conducted to put an end to government corruption.

Asked if the absence of violence made the coup more acceptable to Japan, Sakamoto replied, "No, if (Thailand) were a free, democratic nation, there would be no coup d'etat, but in this case the putsch was not very rough."

Friendly bilateral relations will remain unchanged, he said.

Japan is Thailand's largest single aid donor, accounting for some 70 percent of its economic assistance. Disbursements in 1989 amounted to 488 million U.S. dollars.

The United States decided Saturday to suspend its aid program, which totaled 16.4 million dollars in 1989, to express opposition to the overthrow of the democratically elected government.

Sakamoto said Japan is continuing to monitor the situation.

Radioactive Leak Shuts Down Nuclear Power Plant

OW2202162991 Tokyo KYODO in English 1619 GMT 22 Feb 91

[Text] Sendai, Feb. 23 KYODO—Radioactive steam leaking in a reactor core's cooling system at a nuclear power plant in Miyagi Prefecture forced a temporary halt to its operation Friday in the third nuclear plant mishap to hit Japan in two weeks. Operation of the No. 1 reactor at Tohoku Electric Power Co.'s Onagawa Nuclear Power Plant will resume after the replacement of the affected parts, the company said. There was no radioactive leakage into the atmosphere, company officials said.

A cooling-water filtering device of the 524,000-kilowatt boiling water-type nuclear reactor was shut down at 3:41 p.m. after a monitor detected radioactive steam leaking from the system, utility company officials said. Investigation showed that 720,000 becquerels of radioactivity had leaked from a damaged valve in the filtering system, the officials said. But the flow of radioactive steam was contained inside the reinforced vessel. The system will be restarted after the damaged valve packings are replaced Saturday, the officials said.

On Thursday, a problem in the turbine system of the No. 2 reactor at Tokyo Electric Power Co.'s Kashiwazaki Kariwa Nuclear Power Plant in Niigata caused the automatic shutdown of the reactor, although no radiation leakage was immediately reported.

On February 9, the Kansai Electric Power Co. reported shutdown of a nuclear reactor at its Mihama Plant in Fukui Prefecture due to a cracked coolant tube.

Wrong Part at Fault

OW2302123191 Tokyo KYODO in English 1220 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Text] Sendai, Feb. 23 KYODO—A wrong valve part at a pipe joint caused radioactive steam to leak in a nuclear reactor's cooling system at a power plant in Miyagi Prefecture on Friday, company officials said Saturday.

But the accident was not serious enough to shut down the reactor or affect power generation at Tohoku Electric Power Company's Onagawa Nuclear Power Plant, they said. Plant operators shut down a cooling water filter system Friday afternoon after a monitor detected radioactive steam leaking from it. No abnormal radioactive levels were reported outside the plant, Miyagi Prefectural Government officials said. Workers mistakenly had attached a low-pressure packing part to a depressurizing valve in a pipe joint for air outlet during a regular inspection last fall, officials of Tohoku Electric Power Co. said.

Operation of the water filtering system in the plant's No. 1 boiling-water type nuclear reactor resumed 24 hours after the incident when the incorrect part was replaced with an appropriate high-pressure packing part, the officials said.

North Korea

WPK Delegation Continues Visit to Japan

Tours Kobe

SK2302112391 Pyongyang KCNA in English 1055 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Text] Hyogo February 23 (KCNA correspondant)—The delegation of the Workers' Party of Korea [WPK] led by Kim Yong-sun, secretary of the Central Committee of the WPK, vice-chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Supreme People's Assembly [SPA] and deputy to the SPA, on a visit to Japan, today went round Kobe City, Hyogo Prefecture.

The delegation was accompanied by Hajime Ishii, acting president of the Foreign Affairs Research Council of the Liberal Democratic Party [LDP], member of the House of Representatives and chairman of the welcome committee for the WPK delegation.

After making a round of Kobe port the delegation acquainted itself with the process of the construction of an artificial sea town and commanded a bird's-eye view of the city from an observatory.

Then the delegation was entertained to a luncheon by the governor of Hyogo Prefecture and the mayor of Kobe.

Earlier, on the evening of February 22, the Kansai Economic Federation and the Osaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry hosted a dinner party for the delegation.

Members of the delegation were invited to the dinner.

Present there were Hajime Ishii, Liberal Democratic member of the House of Representatives; Osamu Uno, president of the Kansai Economic Federation; Ryoichi Maosushita, consultant of the Osaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry; and other figures of ecomomic circles in Kansai district.

The delegation had a friendly talk with reporters who had accompanied the LDP delegations led by Shin Kanemaru, former deputy prime minister, and Ichiro Ozawa, general secretary of the LDP, who are Liberal Democratic members of the House of Representatives, on Korean visit and was invited to a luncheon arranged by the director of the International Department of the LDP.

Attends Banquet; Kanemaru Speaks

SK2302114091 Pyongyang KCNA in English 1100 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Text] Kyoto February 23 (KCNA correspondent)—A meeting for Japan-Korea friendship and for welcoming the delegation of the Workers' Party of Korea [WPK] took place with a large attendance in Kyoto Friday evening.

Invited there were Choe Mun-son, chief secretary of the Pyongyang Municipal Committee of the WPK and deputy to the Supreme People's Assembly, who is deputy head of the WPK delegation, and vice-chairman of the Korean Society for Cultural Relations With Foreign Countries Yi Chol-sin and president of Samhung University Nam Sun-hui who are members of the delegation.

Present were former Deputy Prime Minister Shin Kanemaru and Hiromu Nonaka who are members of the House of Representatives from the Liberal Democratic Party; Yukio Takemura, member of the House of Representatives from the Japan Social-Democratic Party; Kiyoshi Nishinaka, member of the House of Representatives from the Komei Party; Temiichi Aramaki, governor of Kyoto Prefecture; Tomoyuki Tanabe, mayor of Kyoto; Osamu Inoue, chairman of the Kyoto prefectural assembly; and other figures of political, fiancial, academic, trade union, cultural and legal circles in Kyoto Prefecture, some 1,000 in all.

Also present were the director of the International Department of the Central Standing Committee of the General Association of Korean Residents in Japan (Chongnyon), the chairman of the Kyoto prefectural headquarters of Chongnyon and other officials of Chongnyon and Korean industrialists and traders.

Kosho Mizutani, ex-president of Buddhist University, made a welcoming address on behalf of the welcome committee for the delegation of the Workers' Party of Korea.

Then, Shin Kanemaru delivered a speech.

Wholeheartedly welcoming the WPK delegation, he said that its visit to Japan is of great significance.

He said:

I think, Japan has a lot of things to apologize for, save the 36 year-long colonial rule over Korea. Japan must make an apology from the bottom of her heart. Japan should make compensation for the 36-year long colonial rule and for the 45 years after the war. But, in my opinion, these two kinds of compensation are not the same.

Some reports say that I do not know diplomacy. One may say so, because I have never been a foreign minister. I judged and made the decision as a politician.

I am confident that I am right. When I was visiting Pyongyang and after the delegation of the Workers' Party of Korea arrived in Japan, I told Secretary Kim Yong-sun in general term that it was desirable to solve the question of nuclear inspection.

If this question is to be solved, I think, high-level talks must be held between the DPRK and the United States. If necessary, I will mediate between the United States and the DPRK to this end.

I hope you will understand well the purport of my efforts to improve the relations between Japan and the DPRK.

Historians of the next generation will judge whether what I have done is right or wrong.

Speaking next, Mayor Akiyuki Tanabe said that the normalisation of diplomatic relations between Japan and the DPRK is an urgent task in strengthening friendship and deepening exchanges between Japan and the DPRK, and warmly welcomed the Japan visit of the WPK delegation.

The floor was taken by deputy head of the WPK delegation Choe Mun-son. After the meeting, a banquet was given for the WPK delegation.

The meeting and the banquet took place in a friendly atmosphere.

Meets Hyogo Governor, Kobe Mayor

SK2402085691 Pyongyang KCNA in English 0840 GMT 24 Feb 91

[Text] Osaka February 23 (KCNA correspondent)—Kim Yong-sun, secretary of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea [WPK], vice-chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Supreme People's Assembly [SPA] and deputy to the SPA, who is leading a WPK delegation on a visit to Japan, met with Toshitami Kaihara, governor of Hyogo Prefecture, and Kazutoshi Sasayama, mayor of Kobe, in Kobe City today.

Present on the occasion were the members of the WPK delegation.

Pak Chae-no, vice-chairman of the central standing committee of the General Association of Korean Residents in Japan (Chongnyon), and Choe Su-yong, chairman of the Hyogo prefectural headquarters of Chongnyon, were on hand.

Present on the Japanese side were Hajime Ishii, member of the House of Representatives and chairman of the welcome committee of the Liberal Democratic Party for the WPK delegation, Masayoshi Takemura, member of the House of Representatives, Tadashi Kajimoto, chairman of the Hyogo Prefectural Assembly, Kozaburo Shimada, chairman of the Kobe City Assembly, Isami Hirasawa, chairman of the Hyogo Prefectural Dietmen's League for the Promotion of Japan-Korea Friendship, and other officials of the prefecture and city.

A conversation took place in a friendly atmosphere.

Meanwhile, the governor of Hyogo Prefecture and the mayor of Kobe gave a luncheon for the WPK delegation.

Speeches were made at the luncheon.

Meets Chongnyon Officials

SK2402094491 Pyongyang KCNA in English 0851 GMT 24 Feb 91

[Text] Osaka February 23 (KCNA correspondent)—A central meeting of Koreans in Japan to welcome the delegation of the Workers' Party of Korea [WPK] was held today at the Korean Cultural House in Osaka.

Present at the meeting were the members of the delegation headed by Kim Yong-sun, secretary of the WPK Central Committee, vice- chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Supreme People's Assembly [SPA] and deputy to the SPA.

The meeting was also attended by Chairman Han Tok-su, First Vice-Chairman Yi Chin-kyu and Vice-Chairmen Pak Chae-no, O Hyong- chin and Yi Mal-sang, the general director of the secretariat and department directors of the central standing committee of the General Association of Korean Residents in Japan (Chongnyon) and chairmen of local headquarters of Chongnyon in Kansai District and district prefectures and other Chongnyon officials, more than 3,500 all told.

Chairman Han Tok-su made a welcome speech.

With unbounded reverence of the Chongnyon officials and Koreans in Japan, he expressed warm thanks to the great leader Marshal Kim Il-song and the dear leader Comrade Kim Chong-il who opened a radical phase for the improvement of DPRK-Japan relations with their outstanding guidance and sent a delegation of the WPK to Japan for a significant meeting with Koreans in Japan.

He said:

The joint declaration issued by the Workers' Party of Korea, the Liberal Democratic Party and the Japan Social-Democratic Party in September last year was an epoch-making event which marked an occasion in improving the DPRK-Japan relations that have remained frozen for 45 years since the liberation of Korea and developing them into near and friendly relations.

The precious achievements of momentous significance made by the WPK delegation in the development of DPRK-Japan friendship and the improvement of DPRK-Japan relations are results of the wise guidance of the great leader and the dear leader and clearly show the world that the independent foreign policy and line of the DPRK are entirely correct.

The Chongnyon officials and Koreans in Japan are looking forward with full confidence to the victory of the socialist cause of juche and the bright future of the movement for national reunification and the improvement of DPRK-Japan relations and are hardening their loyal determination to brilliantly decorate the 80th birthday of the great leader and the 50th birthday of the dear leader next year with proud successes in the mass innovation movement.

In his speech, head of the delegation Kim Yong-sun said:

The Chongnyon officials and Koreans in Japan have performed great exploits which will shine long in the history of the motherland, by hewing a path untrodden by overseas citizens of any other countries, under the banner of the immortal juche idea despite the difficult conditions in an alien land.

Chongnyon has solidly built its ranks as patriotic ranks boundlessly faithful to the great leader and the dear leader, firmly defended the democratic national rights and registered shining success in its fruitful patriotic work to defend socialist homeland with ardor and achieve the independent and peaceful reunification of the country.

The wise guidance and benevolent loving care of the great leader and the dear leader are an eternal life-giving water and the source of inexhaustible power for the Chongnyon officials and Koreans in Japan to perform brilliant feats in the movement of Koreans in Japan.

The road of melting the deep ice of century-long hostility and distrust and bringing a new spring of normalization of diplomatic relations has already been opened and its future is optimistic.

Our party delegation, through the current meeting and talks with the Liberal Democratic Party, could reaffirm that if Korea and Japan hold dear the first step which they have already taken toward the improvement of relations and make joint efforts in conformity with the interests and desire of the two peoples, they are sure to bring good results.

Turning to the revolutionary zeal and fighting spirit of the people in the motherland, Kim Yong-sun said:

No matter how complex the international situation may be, the unique socialism of our own style is unshakable in that it has been chosen by ourselves and built at the cost of our blood and sweat through a hard struggle despite manifold difficulties. Ours is a country which has achieved the granite-firm single-hearted unity of the party and the people around the leader, a country which built a unique socialism of our own style for the working masses in the east and a country which is dynamically building socialism, countering any wild storm with the hot wind of juche. This is a strong stamina and proud appearance of our motherland today.

Noting that the United States and South Korea are staging "Team Spirit" joint military maneuvers this year, too, refusing to accept our advice, he said: Whatever frantic efforts the United States and the South Korean authorities may make, our people will surely see the day of national reunification in the 1990s if the entire fellow countrymen at home and abroad wage a vigorous struggle to realise the great leader's policy of national reunification.

A letter to President Kim Il-song was adopted at the meeting.

After the meeting, a welcome art performance was given by the Kumgangsan Opera Troupe, a local song and dance group of Chongnyon and students of Korean schools in Kansai District.

The Osaka prefectural headquarters of Chongnyon arranged a party for the delegation of the WPK.

Visits Choson University

SK2502055191 Pyongyang KCNA in English 0532 GMT 25 Feb 91

[Text] Tokyo February 24 (KCNA correspondent)—The visiting delegation of the Workers' Party of Korea visited Choson University on Feb. 24. It was accompanied by So Man-sul, vice-chairman of the Central Standing Committee of the General Association of Korean Residents in Japan (Chongnyon). The delegation was met at the university by chairman of the Chongnyon Central Standing Committee Han Tok-su, president of the university Nam Si-u and teachers and students of the university. When the members of the delegation arrived, the students warmly greeted them shouting the slogans "Long live the great leader Marshal Kim Il-song" and "Long live the dear leader Comrade Kim Chong-il" and raising cheers and throwing confetti at them. Girl students put garlands around the necks of the members of the delegation with warm compatriotic feelings. The delegation went round the memorial hall, the gymnasium and other educational facilities of the university. Choson University arranged a party for the delegation. Speeches were exchanged at the party.

Attends Chongnyon Banquet

SK2502064091 Pyongyang KCNA in English 0548 GMT 25 Feb 91

[Text] Tokyo February 24 (KCNA correspondent)—The Central Standing Committee of the General Association of Korean Residents in Japan (Chongnyon), arranged a banquet at the Korean hall in Tokyo this evening in welcome of the delegation of the Workers' Party of Korea [WPK]. Invited there was the delegation of the WPK headed by Kim Yong-sun, secretary of the WPK Central Committee, vice-chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Supreme People's Assembly (SPA) and deputy to the SPA. Present were Chairman of the Chongnyon Central Standing Committee Han Tok-su, its First Vice-chairman Yi Chin-kyu and Vice-chairmen Pak Chae-no, So Man-sul, Ho Chong-man and Pae Pyong-tu, Chongnyon functionaries and Korean traders and industrialists. Han Tok-su made a welcome address. He said that the Japan visit of the WPK delegation was a historical trip which is greatly conducive to the consolidation of the friendly relations between the WPK and the Liberal Democratic Party and the Social-Democratic Party of Japan, improving the relations between the two countries and deepening the bonds of friendship between the two peoples. He further said: The ice which has long existed between the DPRK and Japan began to thaw and a historical page has opened in the relations between the two countries on the principles of independence, equality, mutual respect and reciprocity. This is entirely a brilliant result of the outstanding leadership and meticulous care of the great leader President Kim Il-song, the sun of the nation, and the dear leader Comrade Kim Chong-il, the sagacious successor to the cause of chuche. The speaker extended warmest thanks and highest glory to President Kim Il-song and Comrade Kim Chong-il. He said: Chongnyon and the Korean residents in Japan will make an active contribution to an early establishment of diplomatic relations between the DPRK and Japan through the further development of the good atmosphere of DPRK-Japan friendship which has been created by the current visit to Japan by the WPK delegation and conduct a more energetic work for friendship with the Japanese people. Looking forward with full confidence to the bright prospect of the victory of the socialist cause of chuche, the national reunification movement and the improvement of the relations between the DPRK and Japan, we will successfully carry out all the patriotic tasks of Chongryon for the homeland and the nation and thus make this year a historical year holding a brilliant place in the development of the movement of Koreans in Japan. By so doing, we will significantly celebrate next year the 80th birthday of President Kim Il-song and the 50th birthday of Comrade Kim Chong-il with highest loyalty and shining achievements in the patriotic work, Han Tok-su declared.

Head of the delegation Kim Yong-sun spoke next. The General Association of Korean Residents in Japan (Chongnyon) has established more firmly the ideological system of chuche and the party's monolithic guidance system in the organisation and developed the Koreans' movement in Japan to a new higher stage in conformity with the developing reality over the years so that it may strengthen and develop itself to be an overseas compatriots' organisation of chuche type down through generations, not shaking in any wind, he said and continued: Chongnyon has not only firmly defended the socialist homeland and actively contributed to its prosperity and development under the complex and difficult circumstances, but also has done a lot of work to accelerate national reunification and develop friendship between the Korean and Japanese peoples. All the achievements of Chongnyon are a precious fruition of the wise leadership and warm solicitude of the great leader Comrade Kim Il-song and the dear leader Comrade Kim Chong-il and attributable to the fact that the entire Chongnyon officials, traders and industrialists vigorosuly mobilized and organised the masses of compatriots in the van of the Chongnyon ranks. He expressed the belief that Chongnyon officials would consolidate Chongnyon as firm as a rock organisationally and ideologically and effect a new turn in the struggle for promoting the historical cause of national reunification and bringing earlier the peaceful reunification of the country in the 1990's.

Kim Yong-sun on Nuclear Inspection

SK2502060791 Pyongyang KCNA in English 0519 GMT 25 Feb 91

[Text] Tokyo February 24 (KCNA Correspondent)—Head of the delegation of the Workers' Party of Korea Kim Yong-sun, secretary of the WPK Central Committee, vice-chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Supreme People's Assembly and deputy to the SPA, on a visit to Japan was interviewed separately by Japanese newspaper, news agency and television reporters in Tokyo on February 24.

Kim Yong-sun gave answers clarifying our stand toward the questions of normalization of DPRK-Japan relations, nuclear inspection, North-South dialogue, negotiations between the DPRK and the United States and other questions.

Giving impressions of his Japan visit, he said the WPK delegation on visit to Japan at the invitation of the Liberal Democratic Party and the Social-democratic Party of Japan met with a number of political figures and expressed deep thanks for the warm welcome and hospitality accorded it by Japanese people wherever it went. He stressed the need to strengthen friendship, exchange and cooperation between the two countries in the future.

Turning to the question of the normalization of the DPRK-Japan diplomatic relations, he expressed the belief that today when the full-dress intergovernmental talks for the normalization of the DPRK-Japan diplomatic ties are underway, if delegations of the two countries hold the talks with sincerity in keeping with the desire of the two peoples, good results will be achieved.

With regard to the question of nuclear inspection, the head of the delegation stated that the DPRK has no intention and capacity to develop nuclear weapons. He recalled that the Workers' Party of Korea, together with the Social-democratic Party of Japan, made public a declaration on the establishment of a nuclear-free, peace zone in Northeast Asia in 1981 and has made consistent efforts to create a nuclear-free zone on the Korean Peninsula. Noting that the United States is now raising a hue and cry over the alleged development of nuclear weapons by the DPRK, he stresses that it is a false propaganda to keep more that 1,000 pieces of nuclear weapons in South Korea.

On the North-South dialogue, he said the South Korean side, in spite of our repeated advices, started the "Team Spirit-91" maneuvers increasing tension on the Korean Peninsula and bringing the dialogue to suspension.

He expressed the suspicion that a sinister design to put the brake on the early normalization of Korea-Japan relations under the pretext of tense situation lurks behind the "team spirit" exercises launched by the South Korean side, making the situation strained on the Korean Peninsula at a time when the door has opened for the improvement of DPRK-Japan relations

On the question of the DPRK-U.S. relations, the head of the delegation said that the government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is ready to negotiate any time with the United States over a series of problems including nuclear inspection.

Received by Takako Doi

SK2502072491 Pyongyang KCNA in English 0616 GMT 25 Feb 91

[Text] Tokyo February 25 (KCNA correspondent)—The delegation of the Workers' Party of Korea on a visit to Japan paid a courtesy call on the central headquarters of the Japan Social-Democratic Party here today. Present on the occasion were Kim Yong-sun, secretary of the C.C. [Central Committee], WPK, vice-chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Supreme People's Assembly [SPA] and deputy to the SPA, and the members of the delegation led by him. The delegation was warmly met by Takako Doi, chairwoman of the Central Executive Committee of the Japan Social-Democratic Party, Makoto Tanabe, vice-chairman of the party and member of the House of Representatives, Tsuruo Yamaguchi, general secretary of the party and member of the House of Representatives, Wataru Kubo, vice-chairman of the party and member of the House of Councillors, and other leading officials of the party. Chairwoman Takako Doi posed for a photograph with the members of the WPK delegation and its suite. The delegation left a souvenir at the headquarters.

Talks With Takako Doi

SK2502113391 Pyongyang KCNA in English 1059 GMT 25 Feb 91

[Text] Tokyo February 25 (KCNA correspondent)—Takako Doi, chairwoman of the Central Executive Committee of the Japan Social-Democratic Party [JSDP], today met the delegation of the Workers' Party of Korea [WPK] at the party's central headquarters.

Present there were secretary of the C.C. [Central Committee], the WPK Kim Yong-sun, vice-chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Supreme People's Assembly (SPA) and deputy to the SPA, and the members of the delegation led by him.

Wataru Kubo, vice-chairman of the Central Executive Committee of the Japan Social-Democratic Party and member of the House of Councillors, was on hand.

The head of the delegation Kim Yong-sun conveyed cordial regards of the great leader President Kim Il-song and the dear leader Comrade Kim Chong-il to Chairwoman Takako Doi.

Expressing deep thanks for this, she asked the head of the delegation to forward her heartfelt greetings to His Excellency President Kim Il-song, general secretary of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea, and His Excellency dear Secretary Kim Chong-il.

She said the JSDP would continue to work to develop the traditional relations of friendship and cooperation with the WPK.

The JSDP will make positive efforts to put into effect the joint declaration of the three parties and express invariable support and solidarity for the WPK and the Korean people in the efforts for peace on the Korean Peninsula and peaceful reunification of the country, she stressed.

The talk took place in a comradely and friendly atmosphere.

Meets Party Official

SK2502104591 Pyongyang KCNA in English 1024 GMT 25 Feb 91

[Text] Tokyo February 25 (KCNA correspondent)—Kim Yong-sun, secretary of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea [WPK], vice-chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Supreme People's Assembly [SPA] and deputy to the SPA, who is heading the WPK delegation on a visit to Japan, met here today Wataru Kubo, vice-chairman of the Central Executive Committee of the Japan Social-Democratic Party and member of the House of Councillors.

Kim Yong-sun conveyed warm greetings of the great leader President Kim Il-song and the dear leader Comrade Kim Chong-il to Vice-Chairman Wataru Kubo.

Wataru Kubo asked the head of the delegation to convey his deep thanks to President Kim Il-song and Comrade Kim Chong-il.

The talk took place in a friendly atmosphere.

Today, Kim Yong-sun met amd conversed with Koichi Mori, managing editor of the paper MAINICHI SHIMBUN, in Tokyo.

Holds Talks With Social Democrats

SK2502111291 Pyongyang KCNA in English 1027 GMT 25 Feb 91

[Text] Tokyo February 25 (KCNA correspondent)—Talks between the visiting delegation of the Workers' Party of Korea [WPK] and leading officials of the Japan Social-Democratic Party [JSDP] were held at the central headquarters of the JSDP today.

Present at the talks on our side were head of the delegation Kim Yong-sun who is secretary of the C.C. [Central Committee], the WPK, vice-chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Supreme People's Assembly [SPA] and deputy to the SPA, deputy head of the delegation Choe Mum-son who is chief secretary of the Pyongyang Municipal Party Committee, chairman of the Pyongyang Municipal People's Committee and deputy to the SPA and members of the delegation Won Tong-ku, Kim Yang-kon, Choe Hak-nae, Yi Chol-sin, Choe Hyon-tok, Nam Son-hui and Kim Chong-pyong.

Present on the opposite side were Tsuruo Yamaguchi, secretary general of the Central Executive Committee [CEC] of the JSDP and member of the House of Representatives; Satao Yamahana and Rikyu Shibusawa, deputy secretaries general of the C.E.C., the JSDP and members of the House of Representatives; Nobuyuki Sekiyama, director of the General Affairs Department of the C.E.C., the JSDP and member of the House of Representatives; Issei Inoue, director of the International Department of the C.E.C., the JSDP and member of the House of Representatives; Kunji Tabuchi, director of the Labour Department of the C.E.C., the JSDP and member of the House of Councillors; Hajime Fukada, director of the People's Movement of the C.E.C., the JSDP and member of the House of Councillors; Hironari Ushigoshi, director of the Youth and Children's Department of the C.E.C., the JSDP; Tomiko Okasaki, director of the Women's Department of the C.E.C., the JSDP and member of the House of Representatives; Masakazu Takagi, director for the party organ of the C.E.C., the JSDP; Kogen Nosaka, vice-chairman of the Committee for Measures on Korean Affairs and member of the House of Representatives; Yuzuru Shimazaki, secretary general of the Committee for Measures on Korean Affairs and member of the House of Representatives; and Hiroshi Nukui, member of the C.E.C. in charge of political affairs.

At the talks, the head of the delegation spoke first.

He informed in detail the JSDP leading officials that the Korean people under the wise guidance of the great leader President Kim Il-song and the dear leader Comrade Kim Chong-il have successfully built socialism of Korean style where the masses are the masters of society by applying the juche idea, and energetically worked to achieve peace and peaceful reunification of the Korean Peninsula.

Secretary General Tsuruo Yamaguchi briefed the delegation on the internal conditions of the JSDP and its efforts for denuclearisation and peace and highly praised the significance of the joint declaration adopted by the Workers' Party of Korea, the Japan Social-Democratic Party and the Liberal Democratic Party in September last year.

He noted that the adoption of the joint declaration of the three parties marked an important occasion in the improvement of the DPRK-Japan ties, which he said is conducive to the preservation of peace in Asia and the world.

The JSDP took positive measures for fully supporting the joint declaration of the three parties, he said, and stressed: Japan must fully compensate for the damages it inflicted on Korea during the 36 years of colonial rule over Korea and the 45 years after the war, and the normalization of diplomatic relations between the DPRK and Japan must be realized at an early date.

As is set out in the joint declaration, Korea is one and Korea must be reunified peacefully through North-South dialogues, he stated.

Discussed at the talks were a series of matters including the further development of relations between the WPK and the JSDP and their positive efforts to convert northeast Asia into a nuclear- free, peace zone.

The talks proceeded in a comradely and friendly atmosphere.

KCNA Reports 'Provocative' 21 Feb Exercises

*SK2302102491 Pyongyang KCNA in English
1010 GMT 23 Feb 91*

[Text] Pyongyang February 23 (KCNA)—The U.S. imperialist aggressors staged provocative joint air strike exercises together with the puppets as part of the "Team Spirit 91" joint military exercises on February 21, according to military sources.

That day the U.S. imperialists brought a total of more than 50 fighter-bombers and observation planes such as F-16 and OA-10 to the sky above Kongju and Pyongchang and staged a joint strike exercise against the North in coordination with some 100 fighter- bombers and assault planes of the puppet airforce such as F-4, F-5 and A-37.

On the same day they let dozens of F-16 fighter-bombers fly above Kunwi and Chungju in a frantic ground strike exercise aimed at mounting a surprise attack on the North in coordination with F-4 and F-5 planes belonging to the puppet airforce and brought a KC- 135 tanker plane to the sky above Kunsan for a war exercise of mid-air refuelling to formations of OA-10 observation planes.

And they brought in succession to Osan Airbase C-141 transport planes carrying aggressor troops and combat equipment from the U.S. mainland and deployed them in operational zones for the "Team Spirit 91" joint military exercises.

On Feb. 22, they let U-2 high-altitude strategic reconnaissance plane make a shuttle flight from the east to the west along the Military Demarcation Line for long hours for an aerial espionage on targets in the strategic depths and wide areas of the North.

In separate development, the South Korean authorities committed grave military provocations by firing artillery shells on an extension of the Military Demarcation Line on the sea with the mobilisation of the puppet troops in Paengyong Islet on Feb. 21.

This tells that the U.S. imperialists and the South Korean authorities are making desperate efforts to gratify their wild ambition for northward invasion.

'Adventurous' Aerial Exercise Held 22 Feb

*SK2402083291 Pyongyang KCNA in English
0815 GMT 24 Feb 91*

[Text] Pyongyang February 24 (KCNA)—The U.S. Pacific Airforce command staged one more adventurous joint aerial nuclear strike exercise in the sky above South Korea in accordance with the provocative "Team Spirit 91" program on Feb. 22, according to military sources.

Mobilised in the aerial war exercise were formations of nuclear-capable F-16 fighter-bombers from Japan and other overseas bases and formations of such fighter-bombers, reconnaissance planes and assault planes as F-16, RF-5, F-4, F-5, F-86 and A-37 of the U.S. Airforce occupying South Korea and the puppet airforce, more than 100 all told.

The aerial war exercise was aimed at increasing joint aerial nuclear strike capacities so that formations of nuclear-capable F-16 fighter-bombers may quickly fly to operation zone on the Korean Peninsula from overseas aggression bases in the event of "contingency" and make a surprise attack at main targets in the depth of the northern half of Korea in coordination with fighter planes of the U.S. Airforce occupying South Korea and the puppet airforce.

On the same day the U.S. imperialists brought to Osan Airfield formations of C-141 and C-130 transport planes carrying aggression forces and combat equipment from the U.S. mainland and their overseas bases in the Pacific and deployed them in operational zones for the "Team Spirit 91" joint military exercises.

And they quickly deployed at the Osan and Kunsan Air Bases formations of nuclear-capable F-16 fighter-bombers and formations of FA-18 pursuit-assault planes from Iwakuni and Misawa bases, Japan.

On the other hand, the U.S. imperialists and the South Korean authorities created an atmosphere of war by bringing huge infantry and artillery units to Pochon and Hwachon areas to stage ground and river-crossing offensive exercises with the support of formations of such fighter-bombers and observation planes as F-16, F-5 and OA-10 as part of the "Team Spirit 91" joint military exercises.

The aircraft mobilised in the aerial war exercises in the sky above South Korea in the whole day of Feb. 22 numbered more than 530.

Mass Meetings in Kaesong Denounce Team Spirit

SK2402084691 Pyongyang KCNA in English 0824 GMT 24 Feb 91

[Text] Pyongyang February 24 (KCNA)—Mass meetings were held in Kaesong, a city adjacent to the Military Demarcation Line, and South Pyongan Province to denounce the "Team Spirit 91" joint military exercises of the U.S. imperialists and the South Korean authorities.

Speakers at the Kaesong city mass meeting condemned the adventurous war maneuvers of the U.S. imperialists and the South Korean authorities as a heinous challenge to the DPRK's persistent peace efforts to open a new phase for peace and reunification of the Korean Peninsula.

Pointing out that the the South Korean authorities are staging the criminal war maneuvers in league with outside forces, far from accepting the DPRK's fair and aboveboard proposal for peaceful reunification, the speakers charged that they brought the North- South high-level talks to a crisis of rupture, jeopardizing peace through their policy of confrontation and war moves.

Speakers at the South Pyongan provincial mass meeting denounced the U.S. imperialists and the South Korean authorities for trying to justify their reckless war gamble as "defensive exercises" to ward off "threat" from somebody.

The "Team Spirit 91" joint maneuvers are becoming all the more grave and dangerous because they are being staged at a time when an "emergency wartime system" was proclaimed across South Korea and the U.S. forces and the puppet army were placed in an "emergency mobilization posture" with the outbreak of the Gulf war, they said, and solemnly warned: If the U.S. imperialists and the South Korean ruling group continue their reckless nuclear war maneuvers and scheme to unleash a war against the North despite our repeated warnings, the aggressors would be burnt to death in the flame they kindled.

Release of Captured South Crew Planned for 25 Feb

SK2502062791 Pyongyang Domestic Service in Korean 0505 GMT 25 Feb 91

[Text] Yi Song-ho, acting chairman of the Central Committee of the DPRK Red Cross Society, today sent a telephone notice to Kim Sang-hyop, president of the South Korean National Red Cross.

The telephone notice stated as follows:

According to investigations made by our side's pertinent office, it was confirmed that the Namhae No. 006 boat, which was caught by the patrol boat of the Navy of the Korean People's Army on 5 February, illegally infiltrated into our side's territorial waters. This is a Chinese boat that belongs to a joint venture in which your side's Handu Fisheries Company is a partner.

Among the crew of this boat are five from your side.

All the crew of this boat, including your side's crew, frankly admitted and apologized for their crime of illegally infiltrating deep into our side's territorial waters and petitioned that they be punished leniently.

From the humanitarian and fraternal position, our side's pertinent office decided that our side will not punish them, but forgive them generously, and that our side will return all of the crew, including your crew, and the boat to China on 25 February.

Along with this, I am notifying through you that there has been a warning by our side's pertinent office that in the future your side should carry out appropriate measures so that an act of illegally infiltrating into the territorial waters of our Republic by your side's crew under the pretext of carrying out joint ventures with a third country do not occur again.

Concluding Report on 21 Feb N-S Soccer Team Talks

SK2302135491 Pyongyang Domestic Service in Korean 2100 GMT 22 Feb 91

[Text] The first round of the working-level committee to discuss working-level issues in forming a North-South single team to participate in the sixth World Junior Soccer Championships was held in the South side's area in Panmunjom yesterday.

At the meeting of the working-level committee, the practical matter of fielding a North-South team in international games, the issue of displaying the players' striking abilities and skill, and the issue of opening a new phase of national unity were negotiated and determined.

As is known, all athletes and people in the North, the South, and overseas who heard the news of the agreement on forming a North-South single team to participate in international games are filled with pleasure and deeply impressed. They earnestly expect the North-South players to achieve good results in games.

The world's people, who desire the independent and peaceful reunification of Korea, and the international sports world truly rejoice over the realization of forming a North-South single team and earnestly support and welcome this.

The meeting was attended by our side's members, including Cochairman Kim Se-chin, member of the DPRK Olympic Committee, and by the South side's members, including Cochairman O Wan-kon. The meeting was held behind closed doors according to both sides' agreement.

After the meeting, our side's Cochairman Kim Se-chin held a news conference and briefed reporters on the results of the meeting of the working-level committee. According to him, the selection and training of the players were discussed. The two sides agreed to select 18 players for the sixth World Junior Soccer Championships—nine each from the North and the South—as well as seven officials. The two sides began to negotiate the issue of selecting players through games for the purpose.

Our side proposed choosing 18 players, seven officials, 15 supply personnel, and 20 reporters, some 60 in all, from each side, to visit the North and the South for holding the players selection games.

The South side agreed to that number of players and officials. It, however, claimed that the number of reporters should be 70, greater than the size of the team. So, the issue of the number of reporters was not determined.

It was agreed to finish the selection of players by 8 May, and it was agreed to entrust the inviting side with the matters of referees and the offer of conveniences.

Our side proposed that the dates of the players selection games be 2 May in Seoul and 7 May in Pyongyang. The South side agreed to hold player selection games in Seoul and in Pyongyang. Maintaining only its position on the dates of the player selection games, the South side did not accept our proposal. Thus, no agreement was reached on the dates of holding the player selection games. The two sides decided to continue discussing this issue at the next meeting.

The two sides negotiated the issue of training a North-South single team. The two sides also agreed to train the North-South single team alternatively in Pyongyang from 10-14 May and in Seoul from 16-20 May. It was also agreed to allow a North-South single team participate in an international tournament to be held in France from 27 May to 4 June, to gain experience, and to arrive in Portugal on 5 June.

Our side once again stressed that, considering the experiences in the soccer games held in Pyongyang and in Seoul last year, about 20 reporters are enough for the player selection games, because it was agreed to entrust the inviting side with the offer of conveniences.

Our side urged that the South side deeply consider our just proposal and respond positively at the next meeting.

It was agreed to hold the second working-level meeting on 26 February at Tongilgak, our side's area in Panmunjom.

Daily: South Trying To 'Delay' DPRK-Japan Ties

SK2302110591 Pyongyang KCNA in English 1022 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Text] Pyongyang February 23 (KCNA)—"Co-leader of the Democratic Liberal Party" [DLP] of South Korea Kim Chong-pil during his trip to Japan some time ago begged the Japanese Government to negotiate with the North in the form of flank support to inter-Korean dialogues and take preventive measures lest Japan's reparation to the North should be used in arms buildup.

MINJU CHOSON today brands Kim Chong-pil's act as anti-national, anti-reunification, reactionary and obtrusive act inciting North- South confrontation.

The news analyst says:

It was with a sinister intention to impede the successful progress of the talks between DPRK and Japanese parties for the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries that Kim Chong-pil ran about, soliciting favour of Japanese officials before the Japan visit of a delegation of the Workers' Party of Korea.

When the intergovernmental full-dress talks for DPRK-Japan diplomatic relations began, No Tae-u called in Seoul a "national conference of the South Korean Residents' Association in Japan (Mindan)" and a "national conference of chief secretaries of Mindan organizations" and instructed them to "intensify operations to send a new wind into the North" and "external activities to persuade Japan to shelve the establishment of diplomatic relations with the DPRK."

This time, Kim Chong-pil made the trip to execute No Tae-u's instructions.

The South Korean authorities' move to deliberately delay and foil the normalization of DPRK-Japan diplomatic relations is an unpardonable treachery against the nation.

Papers View Involvement in 'Scandals' in South

SK2302105091 Pyongyang KCNA in English 1016 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Text] Pyongyang February 23 (KCNA)—Kim In-kon, a "national assemblyman" from the "Democratic Libral

Party" [DLP] of South Korea, at a press conference on February 19 declared his withdrawal from the "Democratic Liberal Party".

This is a topic of NODONG SINMUN and MINJU CHOSON today.

Drawing attention to the statement of Kim In-kon that he decided to break with the "DLP", judging that "any will for democratization or restoration of confidence of the people" can no longer be expected because the "DLP" has followed a policy of complete return to the "Fifth Republic", a news analyst of NODONG SINMUN says:

The "DLP" is an alliance of the dictatorial force, a political prostitute and a remnant of "yusin" arranged by the matchmaking of the United States. So, no sooner had it emerged than it became a target of curses, denunciation, and overthrow by the South Korean people and found itself surrounded by foes on all sides. This is proven by a poll conducted by a South Korean organisation, which found that 99.2 percent of the South Koreans opposed the "DLP".

The "DLP" has comletely lost face of late with the exposure of the privileged distribution of housing lot in Suso district, "lawmakers"' foreign trip with money taken in bribes, irregularities in entrance examination at universities and other scandals involving its members. It is No Tae-u who has got into the worst tangles.

He made quite a fuss, ordering Kim Yong-sam the fool to carry out a to "a DLP shakeup" and dismissed "DLP national assemblymen" and the "senior presidential secretary for administrative affairs of Chongwadae" who were involved in the scandal. This was a petty trick to maintain power by propping up the ramshackle "DLP" at whatever cost.

A news analayst of MINJU CHOSON says that the recent declaration of "DLP lawmaker" on his defection from the party reflected the anti-"DLP" sentiments which are daily growing among South Korean people and No Tae-u and the "DLP" group, traitorous, fascist and corrupt, will face a judgement by the people.

South Conducts Antidemocracy 'Fascist Offensive'

SK2302061491 Pyongyang KCNA in English 0453 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Text] Pyongyang February 23 (KCNA)—The South Korean authorities are becoming still more undisguised in their fascist offensive against the forces for reunification and democracy under the pretext of "emergency security measures," after placing the whole land of South Korea under an "emergency wartime system" with the outbreak of the Gulf war, says NODONG SINMUN today.

The news analyst notes:

The No Tae-u ruling group has mobilized the puppet military and police, repressive tool agents, 4,600,000-strong "reserve forces" in check-up and search in Seoul and all other parts of South Korea, raiding progressive organizations and arresting and penalizing people calling for independence, democracy and reunification.

The No ruling group is openly taking the road of military fascist dictatorship, reviving the "Yusin" dictatorship and the "Fifth Republic" dictatorship and dwarfing them. This is an anti-national move to stifle the South Korean pro-reunification patriotic forces and turn back the current toward reunification, an anti-democratic act to turn down even elementary demands for democracy and consolidate the foundations for a long-term office and an anti-peace act to ensure the "security of the rear" essential for a war against the North.

The No ruling group makes the patriotic forces for reunification the main target of attack by the military fascist dictatorship, linking them with the North and branding them as forces for "overthrowing the system". This is, in actuality, the declaration of a war against them.

It is also a deliberate act to get on our nerve and bring North- South dialogue to a rupture and an anti-national act revealing its anti-reunification, divisive stand.

The No ruling group's military fascist rampage surpassing the "Fifth Republic" dictatorship is an anti-democratic criminal act to block the democratic development of South Korea for good and prolong the military fascist dictatorship.

The fact shows that the repressive moves perpetrated in South Korea under the pretext of "emergency security measures" are intended to ensure the "security of the rear" for the provocation of a war, put down the anti-war forces and enlist all the manpower and material resources in the war against the North.

The revival of the truculent military fascist dictatorship of the "Fifth Republic" under the manipulation of the U.S. imperialists is nothing but the last-ditch efforts of the military fascists at their death's door, isolated within and without.

The South Korean rulers must look straight at the trend of the time, stop the fascist row and immediately release coed Yim Su- Hyong and other people who visited the North as messengers of reunification, and all the champions of reunification and democracy.

'New Type' Electric Locomotive Produced

SK1902154291 Pyongyang KCNA in English 1509 GMT 19 Feb 91

[Text] Pyongyang February 19 (KCNA)—7,000 H.P. 8-axle electric locomotive of new type has been produced in Korea.

The electric locomotive made this time by Korean workers and technicans themselves with locally available materials is superior to those produced in the early 80's.

The traction power of the locomotive is 1.3 times that of the former and the service life of the electro-motor more than 3 times.

The operation is very safe.

More than 600 new technical innovation proposals were applied in the production of the locomotives at the Kim Chong-tae General Electric Locomotive Works.

The works situated in the capital city of Pyongyang is a mighty producer of rolling stocks.

4,200 H.P. 6-axle electric locomotive "Pulgungi", the first of its kind in the country, was made by the works in 1961.

The works produces and repairs electric locomotives, diesel engine locomotives, electric trains, passenger cars and so on.

The works is named after Kim Chong-tae, chairman of the Seoul City committee of the Revolutionary Party for Reunification, the predecessor of the South Korean National Democratic Front, who was killed in the fight for the South Korean revolution.

Major Project Construction Speed Rises 40 Percent

SK2002114691 Pyongyang KCNA in English 1010 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Text] Pyongyang February 20 (KCNA)—A great upswing is being effected at the construction sites of major objects in Korea these days. The speed of construction has increased 40 perecent on a daily average as compared with the like period last year in the construction of the Sariwon potassic fertilizer complex, the second- stage construction of the Sunchon vinalon complex, the construction of East Pyongyang thermal power plant, Namgang power station and October 9 general steel works and in the capacity-expansion projects of the Musan mining complex and the Kim Chaek iron and steel complex, and in other projects. Notably, the builders of the Sariwon potassic fertilizer complex which will greatly contribute to the agricultural development of the country and the betterment of the people's living have increased the construction speed more than 80 percent as against the same period of last year. The 38 architectural projects of the caustic soda factory have been completed in the main and the assembling of equipment is being hastened at the construction site of the Sunchon vinalon complex, a chemical industrial giant. The capacity expansion project of the Musan mining complex, a gigantic iron concentrate producer, has also been pressed forward, with the result that a 2,000 odd metre conveyor-laying project has been completed in the main in a short period. Daily plans are being overfulfilled in the construction of Tongil Street in the capital city of Pyongyang and power stations in different places of the country.

South Korea

Spokesman Welcomes U.S. 'Proposal' Iraq Withdraw

SK2302040991 Seoul YONHAP in English 0348 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Text] Seoul, Feb. 23 (YONHAP)—South Korea welcomed Saturday the U.S. proposal calling for Iraq to immediately withdraw from Kuwait.

"We estimate that the offer of the United States on Friday is consistent with the resolutions of the United Nations," Foreign Ministry spokesman Chong Ui-yong said.

"We hope the Gulf war [will] be solved peacefully at an earliest date. We support U.N. resolutions toward peaceful solution of the Gulf question and have participated in multinational efforts for peace and stability in the region."

Government Supports Allied Forces' Gulf Efforts

SK2402063291 Seoul Domestic Service in Korean 0600 GMT 24 Feb 91

[Text] Foreign Ministry Spokesman Chong Ui-yong today issued a statement saying that the opening of the ground war is an inevitable measure to execute the overall resolutions of the UN Security Council and that the Korean Government supports the U.S.-led allied forces' efforts to resolve the crisis in the Gulf.

Spokesman Chong continued to say that our government thinks it a pity that the Gulf crisis has been extended to a ground war because Iraq has rejected the previous measure put forth by the allied forces side. He also revealed that the government hopes that the war can end at an early date so that damages can be reduced to the minimum and stability and peace in the Gulf region can be restored as soon as possible.

No Tae-U Hopes for 'Swift Victory' by Coalition

SK2502003491 Seoul YONHAP in English 0017 GMT 25 Feb 91

[Text] Seoul, Feb. 25 (YONHAP)—President No Tae-u said Sunday the launching of ground war in the Gulf arising from Iraq's failure to withdraw from Kuwait is regrettable and wished for a swift victory by the coalition for a quick end to the war.

No, after a briefing by American Ambassador Donald Gregg and Commander of the South Korea-U.S. Combined Forces Command (CFC) Robert RisCassi on the coalition's ground offensive, said South Korea supports President George Bush's decision.

The one-hour briefing was made in the afternoon, just hours after the launch of ground war by the allied forces.

South Korea's military medical and air transport units dispatched to the Gulf area will hopefully support the coalition's cause effectively, he said.

The president also asked that the CFC work closely together with the South Korean military to analyze situations in the Gulf war for better security measures in the Korean Peninsula.

Gregg expressed U.S. appreciation for South Korea's support for Bush's decision and for sending the medical and air tranport teams to help the multinational alliance.

Firms Jockey for Gulf Reconstruction Projects

SK2302065691 Seoul YONHAP in English 0619 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Text] Seoul, Feb. 23 (YONHAP)—South Korean businesses are jockeying for position in the race to participate in projects to rehabilitate Iraq and Kuwait following the Gulf war, industry sources said Saturday.

As they wait, they gather information on likely projects, beef up departments and prepare people to fly in as soon as the hostilities end, and to improve their chances, the sources said. The Korean firms also are seeking alliances with companies in the United States and Britain, which have an advantage because of their bigger contributions to the war.

To support them, the government will send a team to the Gulf on Sunday and is promoting the formation of consortiums.

The post-war construction bonanza could amount to hundreds of billion of U.S. dollars—80 billion to 200 billion dollars from Iraq and 10 billion dollars from Saudi Arabia. There will be huge demand for daily necessities, clothing and electronic home appliances as well as construction materials such as cement and steel, military supplies and defense-related items, the sources said.

To give Korean firms an edge in the post-war trade battle, the state-run Korea Trade Promotion Corp. (Kotra) says it will send a market survey team to the region as soon as possible, the sources said. On Feb. 21, it re-staffed its trade office in Amman, Jordan, which was evacuated when war began on Jan. 17.

Samsung Co. has sent four employees back to Saudi Arabia to look after its sales networks and start business talks. Lucky-Goldstar is talking to the Kuwaiti government in exile about participation in restoration projects with a U.S. firm and Daewoo will follow suit in cooperation with heavy equipment maker Caterpillar of the U.S.

Hyundai, the sources said, is trying to sell construction materials for roads and power plants, touting its experience with large construction projects in Iraq and Kuwait.

Ssangyong Construction Co., which also has experience in Iran and Iraq, has its eyes set on restoring oil facilities and military bases. Samsung Electronics Co. will set up a sales network using its Dubayy and Egypt branches to promote its goods.

Besides the large business concerns, small- and medium-sized trading firms are actively seeking customers for pharmaceutical products in collaboration with Kotra's nine Mideast offices, according to the sources.

Kim Yong-sun: Kim Chong-il Could Visit Tokyo

SK2502024691 Seoul YONHAP in English 0231 GMT 25 Feb 91

[Text] Tokyo, Feb. 25 (YONHAP)—Kim Yong-sun, secretary for international affairs of North Korea's ruling Workers (Communist) Party, hinted Sunday that North Korean President Kim Il-song's son and heir apparent, Kim Chong-il, might visit Tokyo, if Japan and North Korea succeed in normalizing relations.

The highest North Korean official to visit Japan, Kim Yong-sun made the suggestion to Japanese reporters and said he hoped the normalization negotiations would be settled this year.

Asked about the talks, Kim said, "Excellent results could be seen, we guess, when both sides bridge mutual differences. We have a bright prospect."

North Korea and Japan agreed last year to open talks on normalizing relations.

Pyongyang's demand for compensation for the four decades since 1945, Kim said, had already been settled by the Workers Party and the ruling Liberal Democratic Party and Japan Socialist Party despite the Japanese Government's expressed reluctance.

On international inspection of North Korean nuclear facilities, Kim repeated Pyongyang's position that inspection should take place in South and North Korea simultaneously and that a dialogue is being sought with the United States on that point.

So Chong-won Admits Deception in Suso Case

SK2302035291 Seoul YONHAP in English 0239 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Text] Seoul, Feb. 23 (YONHAP)—Rep. So Chong-won of the Democratic Liberal Party [DLP] said Friday that the ruling party's three co-chairmen signed a document asking for favors to be given to Hanbo Group in relation to the Suso housing site project.

He also said he removed the signatures and all references to their approval from the document he sent to the prosecution shortly after the scandal erupted.

"It is true that my office (No. 3 Policy Coordination Office) got approval from the executive chairman and the co-chairmen on the document, but I erased them before sending it to the prosecution for fear that it might damage the image of the party leaders," he said.

Prosecution sources say So will not be charged for sending a doctored document to the prosecution, because the document was in his name.

So denied he was bagman for the DLP in taking huge payoffs from Hanbo, and denied any Hanbo payoffs to the ruling party.

"Chang Ki-wuk's argument is nonsense. At first I wanted to sue him for libel, but my fellow lawmakers dissuaded me, saying such an action might give credit to Chang's claim," So said.

Chang, a lawyer and chairman of the splinter Democratic Party's human rights committee, quoting a DLP lawmaker under arrest in connection with the Hanbo scandal, on Tuesday maintained that a staggering amount of money from Hanbo illegally was given to the ruling party.

Prosecutors questioned three others about the Suso housing scandal Friday—So aide Kim Chong-yol, Kim Tong-kwan, So's deputy at the DLP's No. 3 Policy Coordination Office, and former DLP chief policymaker Kim Yong-hwan.

The sources said notes allegedly taken by a Construction Ministry official during DLP-government deliberations on the Suso case did not exist.

The opposition had cited the notes as evidence of presidential involvement in the scandal. Kim Yong-hwan is quoted by them as saying, "positive support, Chongwadae and others' intention," which suggests that Chongwadae wanted to give Hanbo the green light for the Suso district development project.

Kim said he did not know that Kim Tong-kwan, deputy chief of the No. 3 Policy Coordination Office, was president of a Hanbo subsidiary from 1984 to 1987.

"I just thought Kim was a former executive of a state-invested company. I did not know him before. I had met him only once, when he was appointed deputy chief of the No. 2 Policy Coordination Office," he said.

So aide Kim Chong-yol said he drafted an official document on DLP deliberation of the Suso case some time between Aug. 20 and 25 last year, before the party made a final decision.

"The document Rep. Yang Song-wu of the Party for Peace and Democracy showed to the National Assembly Administration Committee is the one I drafted. I handed a copy of it to my friends in the housing cooperatives," Kim said.

Kim Tong-kwan told the prosecution he was president of Hanbo Steel Industrial Co. from 1984 to 1987, when he was named head of Hanbo General Construction Co. He said he left Hanbo and became chairman of a district chapter of Kim Yong-sam's Reunification Democratic Party [RDP] in November 1989. After the RDP's merger into the DLP early last year, he joined the coordination office.

"I have not met Hanbo Chairman Chong Tae-su since I left Hanbo. I never served as a go-between between the DLP and Hanbo. I learned of the Suso case only after the scandal broke," Kim said.

PPD Reshuffle 'Expected' in Wake of Suso Scandal

SK2302070791 Seoul YONHAP in English 0626 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Text] Seoul, Feb. 23 (YONHAP)—Nine key functionaries of the main opposition Party for Peace and Democracy (PPD), including floor leader Kim Yong-pae, Secretary-General Kim Pong-ho and chief policymaker Cho Se-hyong, handed in their resignations to party President Kim Tae-chung Saturday.

The decision came after spokesman Pak Sang-chon announced that the party president was planning a reshuffle of key post holders to restore discipline and repair damage done by the Suso housing scandal.

PPD lawmaker Yi Won-pae has been arrested and charged with bribe-taking in connection with the scandal and Hanbo Group was found to have made huge payments to the party.

Floor leader Kim and policymaker Cho will probably be replaced in the reshuffle expected early next week.

Meanwhile, Rep. So Chong-won, chief of the ruling party's No. 3 Policy Coordination Office, said later in the day that he would resign from the National Assembly and his Democratic Liberal Party post. Kim has admitted that he alterated documents on the scandal.

Brunei, Malaysia & Singapore

Malaysia

Mahathir on Balance of Power After Gulf War

BK2302090591 Kuala Lumpur BERNAMA in English 0409 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Text] Kuala Lumpur, Feb 23 (OANA-BERNAMA)—Malaysia has expressed fear that the balance of power in West Asia will no longer exist after the end of the Gulf war when the Islamic countries in the region become weak without the supply of weapons from western nations or the Soviet Union.

Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir Mohamed said that in such a situation, Israel would emerge as a major power while the price of oil would be controlled by foreign powers and no longer by members of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

He said the countries of West Asia would have to sing to the tune of a superpower which had shown its capability of destroying any country in East Asia which attempted to build itself up militarily.

If this happened, it would be difficult to resolve many cases of injustice at the international level, such as the question of Palestine, he added.

Mahathir Urges Solution, Quick Iraqi Withdrawal

BK2202150791 Hong Kong AFP in English 1409 GMT 22 Feb 91

[Text] Kuala Lumpur, Feb 22 (AFP)—Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad Friday urged Iraq to carry out a quick withdrawal of its forces from Kuwait and criticised the United States for rejecting peace overtures. He said that an immediate pullout would signal Iraq's sincerity in accepting the Soviet Union's peace plan to end the Gulf war and help avoid more loss of life.

Dr. Mahathir said Malaysia appreciated the mediatory role played by the Soviet Union in seeking to end the Gulf conflict, adding that Moscow's efforts had raised hopes for an early end to the war. He said that the United States rejection of an earlier offer by Baghdad to undertake a conditional withdrawal and its refusal to halt the bombing of Iraq showed that Washington had no desire for peace.

"We are concerned that the United States may become the major power in the Middle East with no one able to check it. This would mean the U.S. would be able to do as it pleased," he said.

Malaysia, whose population is mainly Moslem, has supported the U.N. resolutions calling for Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait.

Army May Serve in Observer Group in Kuwait

BK2302100791 Kuala Lumpur BERNAMA in English 0913 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Text] Kuala Lumpur, Feb 23 (OANA-BERNAMA)—A 25-man Malaysian detachment has been put on standby to serve in United Nations Military Observer Groups in Kuwait in case of a peaceful settlement to the Gulf war.

It would comprise a lieutenant-colonel and other officers of the rank of Major, Chief of Army General Yaacob Mohamed Zain said here Saturday.

The representative of the world body here had informed the army of a possible deployment of Malaysian military officers to Kuwait under the U.N. banner in case of fruitful peace talks to the war, he said.

On Friday, the U.N. under secretary-general with responsibility for peace-keeping, Marrack Goulding, met with representatives of several countries on possible deployment of military observers to oversee the withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait.

Gen. Yaacob said this time, unlike the U.N. Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group (UNIIMOG), the task of the Kuwait-bound contingent would involve ceasefire and border observation. It would perhaps be similar to the task of the U.N. military assistance group in Namibia last year which observed the withdrawal of South African troops from there, he said.

Malaysia sent an observer team to UNIIMOG and to Namibia to help in U.N. peacekeeping task a year from April 1989 before Namibia gained independence from South Africa. Gen. Tan Sri Yaacob said in the case of the Gulf war, the deployment of military observer groups would be affected once Iraq agreed to withdraw from Kuwait.

Singapore

Wee Views Uncertain Economy, Regional Groupings

BK2202155591 Hong Kong AFP in English 1549 GMT 22 Feb 91

[Text] Singapore, Feb 22 (AFP)—The Gulf conflict has cast a shadow of uncertainty over a future that had appeared full of promise following the end of the Cold War, Singapore President Wee Kim Wee said Friday.

Mr. Wee told the opening session of a new parliament that the next 25 years would bring more surprises, and Singapore must learn to respond effectively to a changing world. Mr. Wee said the collapse of communist regimes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union's commitment to perestroyka and glasnost made favourable the prospects for world peace. But recent events in the Soviet Union and the transition from communism and a command economy to democracy and a free market was difficult and uncertain.

"While overall the change is undoubtedly for the better, the post Cold War will have its own dangers and tensions," he said. But Mr. Wee said that within the region the prospects were favourable, with the tremendous economic growth of East and Southeast Asia likely to continue. He expressed Singapore's support for regional economic groupings. It was the president's first policy speech since Goh Chok Tong took over as prime minister in November from Lee Kuan Yew, who held the post for 31 years.

Parliament was suspended January 29 and its re-opening Friday was to spell out the government's policies and programmes for the immediate future.

Cambodia

Prince Sihanouk Rejects 1992 Elections Proposal

HK2502075091 Hong Kong AFP in English 0734 GMT 25 Feb 91

[Text] Beijing, Feb 25 (AFP)—Cambodian resistance chief Prince Norodom Sihanouk said Monday that possible elections planned by the Phnom Penh government in June 1992 would be illegal.

The former monarch said in a statement released by his office here that the government had no right to organize general elections in Cambodia "whose results would only reflect Hanoi's wish to set in place and 'legalize' the Vietnamese fait accompli in Cambodia." The "current Phnom Penh regime was not born of the Cambodian people," he added.

The Hanoi-backed Cambodian government announced Saturday that it was ready to hold parliamentary elections in June 1992 if a U.N.-sponsored peace plan did not take effect by then between Phnom Penh and the tripartite resistance.

The prince said general elections could not be held before a "real return to total peace and independence within Cambodia's 1969 borders." He added that elections could be organized only under the "supervision of the United Nations in accordance with the peace plan" put forth by the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council—Britain, China, France, the United States and the Soviet Union.

If the peace plan was not implemented "in its entirety" by the four warring factions, he said, then the resistance would not take part in "illegal elections" and would reject their results.

The U.N. peace plan calls for the Supreme National Council representing Phnom Penh and the three resistance factions to occupy the country's U.N. seat in the runup to U.N.-organized polls. The resistance has accepted the plan but the Cambodian government has rejected aspects of it, most notably the dismantling of its army and civil administration.

Phnom Penh also seeks guarantees blocking a return to power by the Beijing-backed Khmer Rouge, the most powerful resistance faction, which is held responsible for the deaths of hundreds of thousands during its 1975-1979 rule.

The Khmer Rouge was ousted after Vietnam invaded Cambodia in late 1978.

The Phnom Penh government explained Saturday that the decision to call parliamentary elections did not mean it was rejecting the peace plan.

Cambodian Foreign Minister Hor Nam Hong said Phnom Penh had not yet decided whether the elections would have a multiparty format.

Beijing had not yet reacted to the announcement as of midday.

Phnom Penh Accused of Using 'Human Shields'

BK2502034291 Hong Kong AFP in English 0325 GMT 25 Feb 91

[Text] Bangkok, Feb 25 (AFP)—A Cambodian guerrilla commander has accused the Phnom Penh Government of using civilians as "human shields."

The allegation, released in a weekend statement, followed reports that Khmer People's National Liberation Front (KPNLF) troops deliberately killed refugees in a camp in northwest Cambodia.

General Sak Sutsakhan, the head of the military wing of the KPNLF, said that because of Cambodian Government "stategies to use civilians as human shields, it was inevitable that civilian casualties occur."

"We deeply regret such incidents," the general said.

Reports from Phnom Penh quoted an International Committee of the Red Cross official as saying the non-communist KPNLF guerrillas killed at least nine civilians in a deliberate attack last week on a displaced persons settlement at Sala Krau.

Gen. Sutsakhan acknowledged that there were "civilian casualties" in Friday's incident. But he said the attack by the KPNLF, one of two small non-communist U.S.-aided factions allied to the powerful Marxist Khmer Rouge, was in response to "fiery attacks" by government troops.

Working Group for Restoration Plan Announced

BK2302125991 Phnom Penh Domestic Service in Cambodian 1100 GMT 23 Feb 91

["Communique"]

[Text] In response to the initiative of His Excellency General Chatchai Chunhawan, prime minister of the Kingdom of Thailand, a three-member working group of the State of Cambodia's Supreme National Council

[SNC] has been set up—comprising 1) Sok An, deputy foreign minister; 2) Trang Iev-tek, engineer; and 3) U Aohat, engineer—in order to take part in the SNC's working group as proposed by His Excellency General Chatchai Chunhawan to quickly restore Cambodia's infrastructures.

Paper Calls for Intensifying Dry Season Attacks

BK2302093991 Phnom Penh Domestic Service in Cambodian 2300 GMT 22 Feb 91

[PRACHEACHON article: "Developing Successful Experiences Achieved in Rainy Season To Intensify Counterattacks Against the Enemy in Dry Season"]

[Text] Strategic maneuvers conducted by the three reactionary Cambodian factions during this year's dry season have clearly shown their warmongering nature. The main goal of their iron-oxide [as heard] tactics is to depose our State of Cambodia [SOC] with the aim of returning the genocidal Pol Pot regime to slaughter the Cambodian people once and for all. At present, as the Cambodian opposition group—Polpotists, Sihanoukists, and Sonsannians—is bent on redoubling its efforts in the most nonsensical, cruel, and barbarous manner to destroy us, genuine peace can never be restored. We have already gained sufficient rainy season experiences in our vigorous counterattacks against the enemies, inflicting heavy setbacks on them. It is therefore imperative that, during this dry season, all of us continue to develop our achieved successes for the motherland by always staying alert to preventing the enemies from butchering the people and destroying the nation's social gains at will.

All grassroots armed units should focus their attention on firmly defending their respective localities by actively counterattacking the enemies through promoting close cooperation among regular army, regional army, people's police forces, militia forces, state authorities, and people and through surmounting all manner of difficulties and obstacles with a view toward achieving enduring success for the country.

To date, the enemies still have not had the genuine goodwill in achieving peace and have not changed their poisonous machinations aimed at ousting the SOC yet. That being the case, we should continue to hold aloft our banner of solidarity and our unity of view and action under the party leadership to oppose the return of the genocidal Pol Pot regime, no ifs, ands, or buts about it. All levels and sectors should energetically use combined forces, combined means, and combined measures to decisively defend and promote stability in their localities. We should heighten our vigilance to thwart all kinds of maneuvers and psychological warfare of the enemies and to fight off their offensives on a timely basis and under all circumstances. We should also develop our mastery in controlling the localities from cities to rural areas as well as along the border and inside the country, remain alert to the enemies' stratagems, and be ready to challenge them. Our cadres, party members, combatants, and people should uphold their mastery to vigorously carry out all kinds of tasks so as to multiply their achievements during the 1991 dry season for the sake of the country's interest.

Tie Banh News Conference on Recent Successes

BK2302133191 Phnom Penh SPK in French 0444 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Text] Phnom Penh 23 Feb (SPK)—Defense Minister Tie Banh has said that, with Chinese-made tanks, heavy artillery, and sophisticated armaments, the Cambodian Tripartite Coalition's forces have intensified their military activities, which have reached a level higher than last year, on the battlefield in northwestern Cambodia—Battambang and Banteay Meanchey Provinces.

In a news conference recently held in Phnom Penh, Tie Banh, who is also member of the Kampuchean People's Revolutionary Party [KPRP] Central Committee Political Bureau and vice chairman of the Council of Ministers, mentioned that:

"During the month ending 20 February, our enemies used tanks and heavy weapons to support their ground troops operating particularly in the vicinity of Kouk Mon and Svay Chek. The region situated along Route 10 in the district of Ratanamondol [Battambang Province] was subject to heavy artillery shelling, and on 22 February alone it was pounded with 5,000 shells."

On recent attacks launched by the reactionary forces in Kampot Province, the minister said the enemy troops could not be qualified as soldiers but were merely bandits.

With regard to casualties, Tie Banh disclosed that between 20 January and 20 February 42 innocent people were killed, 93 wounded, and 28 others taken hostage by the Cambodian opposition group. This does not include the loss of 165 tons of rice, 119 cattle, and 400 houses.

"Our enemies have claimed that they have destroyed eight government tanks, but in fact we have not lost any," affirmed Tie Banh.

The defense minister underlined that the government forces have not recently launched any attacks at all, "bacause we are talking about a cease-fire for negotiations so that peace can be restored as quickly as possible."

"In Pailin [northwestern Cambodia], we are equally on the defensive. We have only launched counterattacks to defend the people and to repel the threat unleashed by the other side.

"Between 20 January and 20 February, we conducted a total of 69 counterattacks, particularly in the northwestern region of the country, while the other side launched 151 artillery attacks. The governmental forces put 920 enemy soldiers out of action, including 617 killed, 121 captured, and 182 forced to surrender. We seized 848 firearms, 150 tons of ammunition, and 883 mines, and destroyed three tanks, three trucks, and a number of enemy hideouts.

"Most of the seized weapons are heavy armaments such as 120-mm and 100-mm cannons and 82-mm mortars," said Tie Banh, pointing out that the governmental forces have maintained their positions and the situation has returned to normal.

"We are not warmongers. We will do our utmost for peace and to bring the war to an end," Tie Banh reaffirmed.

LPRP Propaganda Delegation Arrives for Visit

BK2402063391 Phnom Penh SPK in French 0400 GMT 24 Feb 91

[Text] Phnom Penh 24 February (SPK)—A delegation of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party [LPRP] Central Committee's Propaganda and Education Commission led by its chairman Somlat Chanthamat, member of the LPRP Central Committee, arrived in Phnom Penh on 22 February for a nine-day official visit to Cambodia.

The delegation was welcomed upon its arrival by Dit Munti, member of the Kampuchean People's Revolutionary Party [KPRP] Central Committee and chairman the KPRP Central Committee's Propaganda and Education Commission, and Samphong Vanithsaveth, acting Lao charge d'affairs to Cambodia.

According to schedule, the Lao Party's Propaganda and Education Commission will hold talks with its Cambodian counterpart led by Dit Munti and will be received by Chea Sim, member of the KPRP Central Committee Political Bureau and chairman of both the National Assembly and the Kampuchean United Front for National Construction and Defense.

Japanese Envoy Leaves for Ho Chi Minh City

BK2302132991 Phnom Penh SPK in English 1111 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Text] Phnom Penh SPK February 23—Senior Japanese diplomat Yukio Imagawa left here Saturday [23 February] morning by road for Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, winding up his 10-day fact-finding tour and after discussing peace moves with Cambodian leaders and senior officials.

While here, Mr. Imagawa was received by National Assembly Chairman Chea Sim and Interior [words indistinct]. He also met with Foreign Minister Hor Namhomg and other senior officials. Talks were also arranged between him and representatives of diplomatic missions of Vietnam, the Soviet Union and India.

The Japanese diplomat also visited the provinces of Kompong Speu, Kompong Chhnang and Koh Kong, a thriving port near the Thai border, to make a serious study of the economic and security situation.

Mr. Imagawa is a fluent Khmer speaker whose diplomat career began in Phnom Penh in 1957. He played an important role in the June meeting Japan hosted in Tokyo between Prime Minister Hun Sen and Prince Norodom Sihanouk, president of the opposition tripartite coalition of Democratic Kampuchea dominated by the Khmer Rouge.

Tie Banh Greets Soviets on Army-Navy Day

BK2402073391 Phnom Penh Domestic Service in Cambodian 1200 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Message from Defense Minister Tie Banh to Soviet counterpart Yazov on 73d anniversary of Soviet Army and Navy]

[Text] Dear Comrade Minister: On behalf of all combatants in the Cambodian People's Army and in my own name, I would like to express warm and most sincere congratulations to you and cadres and combatants of the Soviet Army and Navy on the 73d founding anniversary of the USSR Army and Navy. We have closely followed and welcomed the sucesses scored by the USSR Army and Navy in the past. May the relations of militant solidarity, friendship, and cooperation between the Cambodian People's Army and the USSR Army and Navy be further strengthened and expanded.

May the comrade minister, cadres, and combatants of the USSR Army and Navy enjoy good health, happiness, and success in every task assigned by the Soviet people.

Please accept my high consideration.

VONADK: Secret Command Post in Phnom Penh

BK2402054191 (Clandestine) Voice of the National Army of Democratic Kampuchea in Cambodian 2315 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Text] According to a recent report from the national resistance forces operating in Phnom Penh, the race-exterminating Vietnamese enemy aggressors have recently established another secret command post in Phnom Penh City for giving orders and controlling their lackeys: the traitorous puppets Hun Sen, Heng Samrin, and Chea Sim. The command post is placed under the direct authority of a Vietnamese general, who directly reports to and receives orders from the Vietnamese authorities in Hanoi.

Apart from commanding and controlling the traitorous puppets, the secret Vietnamese command also gives orders to covert Vietnamese agents who are hidden in various villages, communes, districts, and provinces all over Cambodia.

This is clear evidence that the race-exterminating Vietnamese enemy aggressors have attempted to occupy and control the country forever with a view toward achieving the stinking Indochinese federation strategy of the Hanoi Vietnamese enemy aggressors.

Indonesia

Alatas Regrets Failure To Seek Peace Efforts

BK2502120091 Jakarta ANTARA in English 1050 GMT 25 Feb 91

[Text] Jakarta, Feb 25 (OANA-ANTARA)—Minister of Foreign Affairs Ali Alatas said Monday Indonesia regretted the outbreak of the ground war and the failure of the efforts to solve the Gulf crisis through a peaceful means based on the Soviet proposal.

The minister said the UNSC [United Nations Security Council] failed to remove differences between the Iraq-accepted Soviet proposal and the United States position which had led to the outbreak of the ground war.

Speaking to reporters after receiving Hungarian Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Tamas Katona, Alatas further said Indonesia remained in its stance that diplomacy and political channels should continue to be used even if the war had developed into the worst stage, Minister Alatas said.

The minister reaffirmed his previous statement that Indonesia is concerned not only over the current war but also over the post-war era later in the region, saying that it would leave war traumas if the crisis was ended by exerting force.

According to Alatas solution by force would leave serious traumas to the region. Moreover, the Middle East has for long suffered from wars, hardship and injustice.

Indonesia believes that the region could achieve stability and lasting peace only through comprehensive political solution the minister said.

Alatas is of the opinion that the way out for differences between Iraq and the allies on an Iraqi pullout from Kuwait could be found if efforts were given sufficient time before the ground war was launched.

In reply to questions on the peace efforts of foreign ministers of Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), Alatas said he had not yet been informed of the latest development on it.

NAM foreign ministers were earlier reported that they would leave for Baghdad and Washington as well to meet UNSC to seek peaceful solution.

The NAM missions—which are coordinated by NAM chairman Yugoslavia—should have been in Tehran before the worsening of the war. 'But I have not yet received further reports on it,' Alatas added.

Foreign ministers from 16 NAM member countries decided at a meeting in Belgrade on February 11-12 to send peace missions to discuss a solution to the Gulf war.

In the meantime, Chairman of the Islamic Solidarity Lukman Harun deplored the United States own decision to launch a ground war without waiting for a decision from the UNSC. Iraq has positively responded to the Soviet's proposal but the United States made its own decision, he said.

'We want peace. The war should be halted,' Lukman said adding that the power of the UNSC to stop a war can now be doubted due to United States' vetoes.

He said that the Organization of Islamic Conference and the Arab League also cannot do anything to seek peace solution.

Minister Urges Assembly To Name Candidates

BK2302052691 Hong Kong AFP in English 0432 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Text] Jakarta, Feb 23 (AFP)—Indonesian Home Affairs Minister Rudini told the country's highest legislative body not to be afraid to name candidates for the next presidency in 1993, press reports said here Saturday.

The leading KOMPAS daily quoted Mr. Rudini as saying Friday that a statement by President Suharto had left no doubt that the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) should not fear naming candidates for the next five-year presidential term. "What President Suharto said...should be understood as (telling) the MPR not to be afraid to express opinions if they were truly the aspiration of the people," Mr. Rudini told journalists after closing a course for state officials here.

Mr. Suharto, currently serving his fifth consecutive five-year terms, has so far run unopposed. He has indicated in a 1989 biography that his re-election in 1988 might be his last, sparking intense speculation about who might replace him and how they could be chosen. The Constitution does not set a limit to the number of times a president can be reelected.

The president told members of a youth congress who paid him a courtesy call in January that the MPR retained the sole right to elect a president and a vice president and that he had no power whatsoever to influence the MPR in its choices.

Indonesians will vote in 1992 to fill the 400 contested parliamentary seats. The elected representatives will join 100 appointees from the military, who do not vote, to form the House of Representatives. These 500 MPs will be joined by 500 representatives from the regions and public figures to form the MPR which will meet in 1993 to elect the president and vice-president.

Mr. Rudini said the MPR should not fear that the country's current political conditions might not encourage the naming of candidates because any condition could always be changed. "We should have the courage to change conditions. And who else but the MPR and the Indonesian people can make the changes? We must be able to do so," he said.

Retired General Sumitro, former head of the powerful international security agency Kopkamtib Thursday advised the country's political factions not to divulge the name of their candidates as it could open the way for smear campaigns. The general also told a parliamentary hearing that the country needed "new blood in 1993 and political parties should have the courage to initiate changes."

In the past two years, two Moslem groups have already called for the endorsement of Mr. Suharto to rule for another term. Similar statements from many sociopolitical and professional organizations had coloured the runup to the last presidential elections in 1988.

Laos

Vientiane Radio Reports Coup in Thailand

BK2402053091 Vientiane Domestic Service in Lao 1200 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Text] At 1130 on 23 February 1991 in Bangkok, the capital of the Kingdom of Thailand, the Thai military leadership staged a coup to topple the government of Prime Minister General Chatchai Chunhawan, who had been leading the country since August 1988. The junta—called the National Peacekeeping Council—was led by General Sunthon Khongsomphong, military supreme commander, and was composed of the Army, Navy, and Air Force commanders, and the director general of the Police Department.

The council issued a statement saying that the seizure of power was aimed at safeguarding Thailand's institution of the monarchy as well as other institutions and the democratic system. The council also called on the general public to remain calm and carry on their livelihood as usual. It prohibited all military units to make any movements unless they received orders from the council or the junta.

The junta also assigned five persons to the council command positions as follows: Gen Sunthon Khongsomphong, military supreme commander and director of the National Peacekeeping Command, as head; Army Commander General Suchinda Khraprayun, Navy Commander Admiral Praphat Kritsanachan, and Air Force Commander Air Chief Marshal Kaset Rotchananin, as deputy heads; and Deputy Army Commander General Itsaraphong Nunphakdi as secretary general.

The Gen Sunthon Khongsomphong-led National Peacekeeping Council subsequently declared martial law throughout the country. It also abolished the government, dissolved the Senate and the House of Parliament, and abrogated the current Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand.

Front Meeting of Southern Provinces Opens

BK2502062791 Vientiane Domestic Service in Lao 1200 GMT 22 Feb 91

[Text] An enlarged ordinary meeting of the Lao Front for National Construction [LFNC] Central Committee of the five southern provinces of Savannakhet, Saravane, Attopeu, Champassak, and Sekong opened in Savannakhet Province on the morning of 20 February. Phoumi Vongvichit, chairman of the LFNC Central Committee, attended as guest of honor. This was the fourth and last meeting in the series of enlarged ordinary meetings held by the Front Central Committee in its plan to hold the meetings in four different places of the country.

During the meeting, which will last three days, representatives of the LFNC Central Committee and front committees from the five provinces give their views and reports on the achievements in implementing the four main tasks of the LFNC Central Committee as well as the two strategic tasks of defending and building the country in the recent past. It began with a report by the representative of Savannakhet Province—the host province—followed by reports from the representatives of other provinces.

The meeting was also attended by more than 200 representatives of the multiethnic people of all strata, various mass organizations, various services, production bases, state or private-owned business enterprises, intellectuals, and monks or novices from the provinces.

Front Chairman Addresses Meeting in Khammouane

BK2502064591 Vientiane Domestic Service in Lao 0500 GMT 22 Feb 91

[Text] On the morning of 17 February, Phoumi Vongvichit, chairman of the Lao Front for National Construction [LFNC] Central Committee, addressed delegates at the enlarged meeting of the LFNC Central Committee of the four central provinces. The meeting was held in Khammouane Province and was attended by a large number number of intellectuals, personages, Buddhist monks, cadres, and businessmen from throughout the municipal area of Khammouane Province.

Phoumi Vongvichit said: Over the recent past, the front committees of the four central provinces have performed their tasks considerably effectively. But to achieve more in their provinces, the front committees and local administrations at all levels must further cooperate in the front's work. They should understand that the work of the LFNC is the same as that of the party and administrative committees. They should then assist and coordinate with each other in implementing the strategic tasks—defending and building the country. This is with a view to gaining the full confidence of the multi-ethnic people in the leadership of the party and state as well as the LFNC, a confidence which reflects the firm solidarity of all parties. The four basic tasks of the LFNC must be regarded as the tasks of the administration at each level. The four tasks are aimed at promoting and expanding the party's two strategic tasks.

The chairman of the LFNC Central Committee, on behalf of the party and government as well as the LFNC Central Committee, hailed the achievements and victories of the front committees, the local administrations, and multiethnic Lao people in the four central provinces and country throughout the period of national defense and construction as well as during modification work in developing economic establishments.

On the afternoon of the same day, the enlarged ordinary meeting of the LFNC Central Committee of the four central provinces closed successfully after three day's work.

Philippines

Aquino Gives Revolution Anniversary Speech

HK2502115691 Quezon City Radyo ng Bayan in Tagalog 0913 GMT 25 Feb 91

[Speech by President Corazon C. Aquino on the fifth anniversary of the People's Power revolution at the Epifanio delos Santos Avenue [EDSA], Quezon City—live; italicized passages in English]

[Text] Your Eminence Jaime Cardinal Sin, Speaker Ramon Mitra, Chief Justice Marcelo Fernan, Secretary Fidel Ramos, Mrs. Patricia Sison, Your Excellencies of the diplomatic corps, Your Excellency Archbishop Giandecessco Moreni, honorable members of the Senate and House of Representatives, fellow workers in government, my beloved countrymen:

Last week, somebody rang up Malacanang and allegedly asked if I was going to talk about flies today. I said, it is not necessary. Maybe we will talk about politics in 1992 because I will ask for your help to elect those whom we choose to be our candidates. But as of now, we are gathered here at EDSA [Epifanio delos Santos Avenue] to greet the Filipino nation on this noble day, the fifth anniversary of the People Power and Prayer Power. We are also here to strengthen the spirit of EDSA. What is the essence of EDSA? If you ask me, there are three parts of the EDSA spirit: First is brotherhood and unity; second is prayer, we offer ourselves to the Lord; and third is our firm resolve for peaceful means.

During the past five years of my service, I was pleased with the partnership and cooperation between our government and the private sector. Even before I launched the partnership movement on 12 June 1990, there were already many programs and projects being carried out by our government with the help of our nongovernmental organizations and the people's organizations, NGOs and POs, like the programs by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the DENR, under Secretary Fulgencio Factoran, Jr. You know, the DENR has a reforestation program and with the help of ADB [Asian Development Bank] and OECF [expansion unknown], had a funding of $240 million during the past three years. Jun Factoran approached the NGOs, the local government units, and the farmers' families and gave them contracts on our reforestation program. Jun Factoran reported to me that this yielded good results because there was cooperation between the various entities.

Last year, relatives of missing persons approached me and said they needed the government's help to locate their missing relatives. I then formed a committee on human rights and made Secretary Franklin Drilon of the Department of Justice the chairman. Secretary Drilon helped these missing persons' relatives by approaching the military. He brought closer the human rights' group and the military authorities. This is an accomplishment under the partnership program and through the leadership of Secretary Franklin Drilon of the Department of Justice.

In the Lank Bank, our partnership program has a wide scope. In 1986, only 7,000 farmers were able to avail themselves of loans from the Land Bank of the Philippines [LBP] totaling P107 milion [Philippine pesos]. But in 1990, 305,000 farmers were given loans amounting to P2.8 billion. What is good here is that the Land Bank of the Philippines charges low interest. The farmers' production was up and they were able to pay back the Land Bank of the Philippines. Sonny Vistan, LBP president, reported that 95 percent of their debtors were able to pay back.

The NHA, National Housing Authority, also has a partnershp program. This is a joint-venture program with private developers. Today we have 31 joint venture projects with a total of 18,000 house and lot packages. Of these 31 joint ventures, 24 are ongoing and the total project cost is P1.5 billion. Thus, the NHA's equity is P302 million. Therefore, due to the NHA's partnership with the private sector, they were able to do more for our countrymen, especially for our poor brothers. In fact, they have an ongoing medium-rise housing project similar to those being constructed in Vitas, Tondo, totaling 1,600 units; 176 units in San Andres Bukid; and 100 units in Jolo, Madaluyong.

All of our government departments and agencies have partnership programs because I instructed them to carry out partnership projects and programs.

In Pangasinan, Governor Rafael Colet organized the Pangasinan People's Development Foundation comprising over 4,000 farmers. He was able to get the farmers loans from the Land Bank and they were given appropriate training with the help of the Department of Agriculture. The farmers' production in Pangasinan rose and the banks were paid in full.

In south Cotabato there is a strong partnership between the government, church, the NGOs, businessmen, and the common people. The denuded mountains of Tibuli and Bilaan were again replanted with trees and fruit-bearing trees. This was done through the efforts of Bong Garucho and his colleagues.

The St. Cruz mission and other church parishes are helping in teaching and giving information on livelihood programs and good moral orientation.

The (Dolphin) set up its own foundation which does not only give benefits but also takes part in organizing the people for the improvement of their respective places.

Governor Mike Suelo and his mayors are fully cooperating with the communities to create a livelihood of their own.

The Department of Science and Technology [DOST], for their part, makes organic fertilizers as their partnership program. You know, because our farmers need fertilizers to increase their produce, our DOST makes trichoderma, which speeds up the decomposition of waste products.

One user of organic fertilizer is Comrade Dante [former New People's Army chairman]. He uses 100 percent organic fertilizer and no longer buys imported fertilizer. So, this is a partnership program which I expect to succeed and be of great benefit to the farmers.

I have a Presidential Social Fund. What we do with this social fund is help construct schools, water projects, livelihood projects, and other programs, like street children programs. We give the NGOs help to build these schools and water projects. From our experience, the implementation of these projects is faster with the help of the NGOs, private sector, and local government officials. The results are also much better.

I cannot finish telling you about all these successful projects in one day. The names of Father Vergara of Nueva Eciaj, Sister Emma and the women of San Miguel, Bulacan, and many governors like Governor Roberto Pagdanganan of Bulacan; Governor Ditay Lacson of Negros Occidental; Governor Parabang of Bohol, and I want to apologize to all the mayors and governors whose names I could not mention today. [sentence as heard] However, I'm sure that all the people within your constituencies know of the assistance you are giving them.

Why do we talk about this partnership? Because those whom the government has helped asked me: Mrs. President, since you are no longer running in 1992, what is our assurance that these partneship programs will be pursued? I think this is up to us. If we strengthen our organizations, firm up our unity, whoever will replace me as your president, I think will pursue these good programs. So, from today until my term lapses, let us unite and observe who we think is worthy of becoming our president and be a help to our countrymen.

During my term as president, I tried to bring closer our military and civilians. We started with the peace and order councils. Together in the peace and order coucils are our local government officials and our military commanders. We created the National Disaster Coordinating Council which is chaired by Secretary Fidel Ramos. Maybe you can still recall that during earthquakes and typhoons, the first to help out is the military, together with the Department of Public Works and Highways, DSWD [Department of Social Welfare and Development], and local government officials.

I also wanted to bring closer the relationship between the Philippine Military Academy [PMA] and the students in Metro Manila. There was a fellowship program. The PMA cadets come here to various universities and colleges and get acquainted with Manila students. You know this was very important because before this program was started, there was a distrust in that the Metro Manila students were not exactly trusting the PMA cadets and the PMA cadets were also suspicious of the Metro Manila students. But when they got to know each other, they realized they were one in feelings and goal which is to help towards the improvement and stability of the country. In fact, I have said this in the PMA, because of the closer relations between the PMA and Metro Manila students, a couple got married. I was a sponsor at the first marriage between a PMA cadet and a De La Salle student.

We also had a Give-a-Heart Foundation because I wanted the wives of our cabinet members and generals to unite and help our countrymen. They are doing this not only in times of quakes and typhoons, but every day. They have chosen schools to which they give milk to help improve the health of our youths.

We have shown good deeds during the past five years because the citizenry no longer look at the military as an enemy but a defender and helper. I am hoping for a closer relationship between our military and the civilians in the future to avoid problems similar to those which happened in 1987 and 1989.

Because this will be my second to last appearance before you on February 25 as your president, I wish to tell you what my wish is for our government—to be united with the people they serve and I hope our businessmen unite with their community so that our rich and strong may unite with our weak and poor. May we always think that we are all Filipinos and are lucky God made us Filipinos. And I hope we can spread and strengthen democracy and strengthen our human rights organizations so that they can succeed through their own efforts and decisions.

I wish to thank Crissy Singson, the chairperson of the [word indistinct] EDSA anniversary committee, let us give her a hand [applause]. I also wish to thank her committee and all Metro Manila mayors who helped in this EDSA anniversary celebration.

This morning, I visited the exhibits in Crame and I was shown the NGO exhibits. Crissy Sison asked me if the government can give a permanent site for the NGO exhibits. So, when I went back to the guest house, I told Secretary Orbos to find a place to donate to the NGOs for their exhibit hall or ground so that our countrymen can see successful projects, so they can do the same and help themselves.

I am thankful that as of today and because we have already captured many military rebels, maybe peace will now be with us. So, let us continue to pray, especially for our brothers in the Middle East, particularly those in the countries where fighting is taking place. Many thanks and long life to all. [applause]

Aquino Denies Manglapus-U.S. 'Secret Deal'

HK2302052091 Manila DWIZ Radio News 882 in Tagalog 0400 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Text] President Corazon Aquino has denied reports stating that Foreign Affairs Secretary Raul Manglapus left for Washington to close a secret deal for the continued stay of the military bases in the Philippines. The president issued the statement in relation to speculations that Manglapus might sign an executive agreement for a new U.S. military facilities agreement.

In this connection, Presidential Spokesman Adolf Azcuna said that Manglapus' mission is only to testify in a case involving the killing of two Filipino labor leaders. Azcuna also said that Manglapus will use the opportunity to talk to the American media regarding the Philippine position on the U.S. bases.

Thailand

Reportage Leading Up to Coup on 23 Feb

Athit: 'No Justification' for Coup

BK2302032791 Bangkok THE NATION in English 23 Feb 91 p A4

[Text] Newly-appointed Deputy Defence Minister Gen Athit Kamlang-ek yesterday dismissed press reports that the armed forces have grown discontented with the Chatchai government to the point that they might stage a coup against it.

While maintaining that the government still enjoys "good relations" with the armed forces, Gen Athit said he was convinced that there would not be another coup in Thailand.

"There is no justification for a coup. Soldiers have become more democracy-minded," said Gen Athit whose appointment as deputy defence minister on Wednesday is believed to have heightened tensions between the government and the military.

Informed sources said they believe Prime Minister Chatchai Chunhawan is using Athit, who is concurrently deputy prime minister, to counter growing discontentment in the armed forces.

Some Thai-language newspapers reported yesterday that several military units were put on alert following Athit's appointment.

Athit, who was formerly supreme commander and army chief, is reported to be at odds with several key military leaders.

Athit yesterday blamed the press for the current political tensions.

"Relations between the government and the armed forces are already good. There is no need for me to help," he said when asked how he hoped to improve the government's strained relations with the military.

Army Commander in Chief Gen Suchinda Khraprayun and other military leaders have declined direct comments on Athit's new role.

Prime Minister's Aide Confesses

BK2302015591 Bangkok THE NATION in English 23 Feb 91 pp A1, A3

[Text] Whether he was speaking under duress or not remains a hotly debated question. But if what Col Bunsak Phocharoen says in a highly controversial videotaped confession is true, then the charge that there was a third assassination target in the alleged 1982 plots would be given a lot more weight.

Bunsak clearly points an accusing finger at Maj Gen Manun Rupkachon, blaming him for everything that was connected to the alleged plots.

Manun, who is a military aide to the prime minister and a classmate of Bunsak in the Class-7 of Chulalongkon [as published] Royal Military Academy, has contended that Bunsak was "kidnapped" and held by a group of police investigators against his will since Feb 10.

The military sees the taped confession by Bunsak as one of the most incriminating pieces of evidence so far against Manun and is trying to make the most out of it to influence public opinions. In his confession, said to be taped on Feb 10, Bunsak repeatedly stresses that he was not coerced into saying anything that was untrue. "I have come to the point in life when I have to accept all the consequences of what I have done in the past.

"I realize that I once took the wrong road and now I regret and repent," says Bunsak, reading from a prepared statement.

"I hereby reaffirm all what I've said in my testimony to the investigators given on Sept 17, 1984.

"Everything therein, every word I have said is truthful. There'll be no change or retraction whatsoever," he adds.

The video tape, which was played to a small group of reporters at the home of an army officer Thursday night, starts with the martial song Sayammanusati and a verse on patriotism and allegiance to the monarchy. Then Bunsak appears, dressed in deep blue safari suit and matching pants, walking upstairs to a room in a white building.

He is accompanied by Pol [Police] Lt Gen Bunchu Wangkanon, former commission of the Central Investigation Bureau and now deputy police chief (administrative affairs), and about a dozen of police officers in Bunchu's team probing the assassination conspiracy.

Before entering the room, Bunsak pays respect to the portraits of Their Majesties and pledges his allegiance to the Monarchy.

Bunchu says a few words as intoduction and asks Bunsak to clarify whether he is being held against his will or forced to say anything he doesn't want to. Bunsak replies that he is not under any duress and he will speak his mind.

With Bunchu and his police subordinates watching passively, Bunsak starts reading his three-page confession which is addressed to "my fellow countrymen" who have unquestionable allegiance to and love for the Chakri Dynasty.

He then recalls his association with Manun during the heydays of the Young Turks (the army officers who were graduates in the Class-7 led by Manun) in the late 1970s and early 1982s and the assassination plots in general terms.

Bunsak doesn't name anyone else other than Manun, whom he bitterly describes as an "overly ambitious man" who play politics with his colleagues, his superiors and subordinates to fulfil his political ambition.

"I would like to warn against any attempt to distort the investigation, as doing so is tantamount to being disloyal to the nation.

"I have seen many senior policemen meet with Major General Manun."

The video-taped confession did not include details about what Manun had allegedly done in connection with the alleged assassination plot.

Bunsak relates that he was arrested on Sept 15, 1984 but was released after he gave his testimony. He entered monkhood for two years. It was during his monkhood that, he claims, he came to a better understanding of himself and his fate.

He also says Bunchu, whom he addressed as 'Phi Bunchu' (because Bunchu is in Class-5 of the military academy), has advised him to tell the truth and face all the consequences like a brave soldier.

At the end of Bunsak's prepared statement, Bunchu adds that he admires Bunsak's courage. Bunchu also says the military team which will observe the police investigation wants to listen to Bunsak's personal account of the assassination plots.

Bunsan says he will be happy to meet the military team and do another video tape of his confession, which was recorded on Feb 11. Both of the tapes of Feb 10 and Feb 11 were reportedly shown to Supreme Commander Gen Sunthon Khongsomphong a few days later.

On Feb 15, Geneal Sunthon, in his capacity as the chief national peace-keeper, ordered Bunchu to postpone handing over all the paperwork of his investigation team to a team. The general has also issued a terse warning to any party trying to "distort" the investigation, saying that he will deal with any such unscrupulous attempt with the authority vested in him as the national peacekeeper.

Before the end of Bunsak's confession on Feb 10, he apparently surprised Bunchu and his team when he produced several of hs name cares from a breast pocket and started reading what he had jotted down as outline of his confession on the cards.

"I want to reaffirm that all what I've told the investigators since Sept 17, 1984, is the truth.

"There will be no change of mind. For everything I've said is the truth," he reads.

He told Bunchu he had written the statement on his personal name cards and signed them so that they would be another piece of evidence of his confession. He handed over the cards to Bunchu at the end of the video tape.

Investigator: No Evidence of Plot Against Royalty

BK2302034791 Bangkok THE NATION in English 23 Feb 91 p A3

[By Nikon Chanphrom]

[Text] The chief investigator in the 1982 alleged assassination plot case said yesterday there was no clear evidence that the alleged conspiracy was aimed against the Royal Family.

Crime Suppression Division Commander Siri Temiyawet, who took over the protracted investigation recently, said his fact-finding team had gone through the documentary evidence secured by former investigators.

"After carefully studying the evidence gathered by the old investigation team, we have not yet found any clear evidence which can serve as a basis (for allegations) that there were attempts of wrongdoing against the highest institution," Pol [Police] Maj Gen Siri said.

He confirmed that targets of the alleged plot were former prime minister Prem Tinsulanon and ex-army commander-in-chief Gen Athit Kamlang-ek.

Siri said report that the alleged plot also targeted a Royal Family member was "rather speculative in nature."

Siri was charged with the investigation following a surprise police reshuffle last month which automatically relieved former investigators of the task. Despite the officer's clean image, critics have accused the government of trying to "distort" the case, in which Manun Rupkhachon, an aide to the prime minister, is named as a suspect.

Siri yesterday reiterated his pledge that the investigation would continue without prejudice.

"I won't help the culprits. I won't allow myself to be used by any group," he said.

Siri also confirmed that complaints had been filed against certain former investigators for allegedly failing to arrest some suspects on the wanted list.

After the alleged plot was exposed in 1982, warrants were issued for the arrest of 43 suspects, most of whom are still at large.

Deputy Police Director General Sanong Watthanawarangkun said earlier this week there were complaints that some former investigators neglected their duty, resulting in certain suspects who should have been arrested remaining fugitives.

Siri said some suspects are still government officials and that he was contacting their superiors to find out their current positions.

Troops Seize Mass Communication Installations

Troops Take Over Radio Thailand

BK2302062591 Hong Kong AFP in English 0621 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Text] Bangkok, Feb 23 (AFP)—Troops Saturday took over radio Thailand and other government mass communication installations, officials said.

The move is interpreted by political analysts here as the beginning of a coup.

An official contacted at Radio Thailand said "troops have taken control of the radio," adding "don't call again because it's dangerous" before ringing off.

Prime Minister Chatchai Chunhawan's son, Kraisak Chunhawan, a key adviser to his father, also said he understood armed troops were holding government communications centers.

Officials said soldiers had also seized the offices of the Mass Communication Organization of Thailand, which controls another government-run radio station, as well as TV Channel-9 and the THAI NEWS AGENCY (TNA), also under the government.

The move comes as tension has been growing between the Mr. Chatchai's government and the military establishment.

Mr. Chatchai, 71, became in mid-1988 the first democratically elected prime minister in Thailand.

But he has often been at odds with the leaders of the Armed Forces, which traditionally plays a central role in politics in Thailand.

Troops Fan Out in Bangkok

BK2302074491 Hong Kong AFP in English 0732 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Text] Bangkok, Feb 23 (AFP)—Armed troops Saturday seized government communications facilities and began to fan into the streets of Bangkok in an apparent coup against Prime Minister Chatchai Chunhawan's government, officials and eyewitnesses said.

The move came as tension has been growing between 71-year-old Mr. Chatchai, who became in August 1988 the first democratically elected prime minister in Thailand in 12 years, and the powerful army leadership.

Eyewitnesses reported that tanks had started rumbling down the streets of this capital city where fully armed troops were also being deployed around 1.00 P.M. (0600 GMT).

An official contacted at the Supreme Command Information Department declined to comment.

An AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE reporter on the spot said armed soldiers had moved during the morning into the offices of the Public Relations Department, which runs Radio Thailand.

The soldiers left after ordering the staff to cease all activities, he said.

An official contacted at Radio Thailand said "troops have taken control of the radio," adding "don't call again because it's dangerous," before ringing off.

Soldiers had seized the offices of the Mass Communication Organization of Thailand (MCOT), which controls another government-run radio station, as well as TV Channel-9 and the THAI NEWS AGENCY (TNA), also under the government, officials said.

Mid-day TV news programs were cancelled and Radio Thailand only put out a short item of foreign news on the war in the Gulf at 1.00 P.M. (0600 GMT).

Since absolute monarchy was replaced by constitutional monarchy in 1932, there have been 15 coups in Thailand, seven of them unsucessful.

The latest coup attempt was in September 1985.

Mr. Chatchai, whose immediate whereabouts were not known, has been involved in successive confrontations with the leadership of the Armed Forces, which, despite Thailand's budding democratic system, retains a central role in politics here.

The latest showdown between Mr. Chatichai and the military began earlier this month when behind-the-scene moves by adversaries of the premier turned on the spotlight on a slow-moving inquiry into a mysterious 1982 assassination plot.

The intended victims of the plot were then Prime Minister Prem Tinsulanon, Mr. Chatchai's immediate pedecessor, former Armed Forces chief Athit Kamlang-ek, and an unnamed member of the royal family.

A number of military officers as well as leftwingers appear to be implicated.

The whole affair exploded into a major showdown with leaflets circulated in the capital accusing the prime minister's son and close adviser Kraisak Chunhawan, and Major-General Manun Rupchajorn, an important military aide to Mr. Chatichai, of involvement in the conspiracy.

Both men instantly declared their innocence, but this opened the door for the military, smarting over what they see as Mr. Chatchai's desire to reduce their role in the political scene, to go on the offensive against the government.

A junior army officer told reporters Saturday that Mr. Chatchai had been placed under arrest, but this could not be immediately confirmed.

Prime Minister, Others Arrested in Coup

Chatchai Held at Gunpoint

BK2302132791 Hong Kong AFP in English 1303 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Text] Bangkok, Feb 23 (AFP)—Thai Prime Minister Chatchai Chunhawan was held at gunpoint by seven plainclothes military men at the airport here Saturday after his plane was ordered back from a flight to northern Thailand, witnesses said.

Mr. Chatchai, 71, was removed from the C-130 aircraft and hurriedly taken to the military airport building on the outskirts of Bangkok.

He was flying to the northern province of Chiang Mai for a meeting with King Phumiphon Adunyadet. Accompanying him were newly appointed Deputy Defense Minister Athit Kamlang-ek and journalists from all of Bangkok's five television stations.

Mr. Chatichai and Mr. Athit, who is also deputy prime minister, were to have had an audience with the Thai monarch for Mr. Athit's official swearing-in, following his appointment to the post of deputy defense minister Tuesday.

When the plane landed, seven plainclothes military men pulled out their firearms and entered the craft, ordering everyone to keep calm, witnesses at the airport said.

Mr. Chatchai was taken off the plane at gunpoint while television crewmen were taken into custody.

The prime minister is believed to have been driven straight to the military Supreme Command Headquarters, where unconfirmed reports say he is under arrest. The military announced shortly thereafter that they had taken control of the country.

By late afternoon 30 soldiers, in battle dress and carrying M-16 rifles, sealed off the prime minister's house. A 30-mm anti-tank gun was set up outside the front gate. A second anti-tank gun was positioned about 100 meters away, sealing off the road.

At the Royal Palace, 100 armed troops were positioned inside the gate and other soldiers were patrolling nearby streets.

Five military trucks carrying soldiers armed with guns were sent to Supreme Command Headquarters. The troops tied pieces of white cloth to the ends of their guns, apparently to identify themselves as loyal to the Supreme Command.

As troops moved around the city, it was business as usual in the capital—with people clogging the main shopping centres and regular traffic jams unabated. Witnesses reported no signs of tension and said people were getting on with everyday life.

Aide Confirms Prime Minister's Arrest

BK2302083091 Hong Kong AFP in English 0821 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Text] Bangkok, Feb 23 (AFP)—Thai Prime Minister Chatchai Chunhawan has been arrested here in a coup by the Thai armed forces Saturday, a top official of his fallen administration said.

Mr. Chatchai was being detained at the Supreme Command Office along with Deputy Prime minister Athit Kamlang-ek, said the official who declined to be identified.

Sunthon: Chatchai's Release 'Soon'

BK2502052191 Hong Kong AFP in English 0516 GMT 25 Feb 91

[Text] Bangkok, Feb 25 (AFP)—Thailand's military leader said Monday that deposed Prime Minister Chatchai Chunhawan was to be released soon.

Supreme Commander Sunthon Khongsomphong said that Mr. Chatchai, who was arrested on Saturday in a military coup, would not be put on trial.

The junta has accused the administration of Mr. Chatchai of unprecedented corruption, but it already said no harm would be done to the 71-year-old retired cavalry major-general.

Asked by reporters about Mr. Chatchai's fate, Gen. Sunthon replied: "We'll release him soon when everything is alright."

He did not indicate when the release would take place, but said that Deputy Prime Minister Athit Kamlang-ek, who was arrested at the same time as Mr. Chatchai, would also be freed.

"We are not going to try them. They did not commit any crime," Gen. Sunthon added.

Mr. Chatchai and Mr. Athit, who is known for having bad relations with many military commanders, were both seized as they were on their way to a meeting with Thailand's constitutional monarch, King Phumiphon Adunyadet, on Saturday.

The king is currently in the northern city of Chiang Mai, 700 kilometers (420 miles) from Bangkok.

The two men had boarded a military plane bound for Chiang Mai, but were arrested by plainclothes air force security men as the plane was taxiing.

Manhunt for Chatchai's Son

BK2402125991 Hong Kong AFP in English 1242 GMT 24 Feb 91

[By Michael Shari]

[Excerpt] Bangkok, Feb 24 (AFP)—The Thai Army chief pledged Sunday after toppling a civilian government in a bloodless coup to scale down the presence of troops on the streets here amid efforts to return to a semblance of normality.

The streets of the Thai capital remained calm while troops were seen pulling out of several government buildings that were occupied during the early hours of the coup on Saturday, but witnesses said some troops remained on guard.

Tanks and armoured personnel carriers were deployed Saturday to protect military command headquarters and an army-run television station broadcasting announcements of the newly-formed National Peacekeeping Council (NPC).

Television and radio stations switched Sunday evening from martial music and military announcements to normal broadcasting.

A military spokesman announced a few minutes before the switch: "the situation has returned to normal."

He also said that press censorship controls instituted on Saturday by the NPC were being lifted.

"We will partially remove the security units, so come Monday the civilian population will see a minimum of military hardware," Army Chief General Suchinda Khraprayun, who is second in the NPC's leadership line-up but believed to be the strongman behind the coup, told reporters.

Gen. Suchinda was speaking while a massive manhunt was under way for nine key government advisers including the son of deposed Prime Minister Chatchai Chuhawan, Kraisak Chunhawan.

Major General Manun Rupkachon, a leading suspect in a 1982 assassination plot against key public figures including Thai Queen Sirikit, and Chaloem Yubamrung, an ex-minister and savage critic of the military, were also being sought.

Immigration officials at all exit points out of the country have been put on full alert and ordered to stop the men from leaving.

According to unconfirmed reports, at least two of the prime minister's former advisors were seized by troops on Saturday shortly after the coup began.

The NPC announced on Sunday that it planned to hold power for six months in a bid to hold elections and return the country to democracy. [passage omitted]

Soldiers Fail To Arrest Aide

BK2402015191 Bangkok THE NATION in English 24 Feb 91 p A2

[Text] About 50 soldiers stormed the Bangkok residence of Maj Gen Manun Rupkhachon yesterday but failed in their bid to capture the close aide of the deposed prime minister.

The soldiers from the Anti-Aircraft Division arrived at Manun's house in Lat Phrao Soi 35 at around 1.30 pm in two army trucks and two motorcycles.

Some of them destroyed a motorcycle parked in front of Manun's residence and about 10 soldiers climbed over the wall into the house, witnesses said.

Manun's son, Attha, who was inside the house with his daughter, at first refused to let the soldiers enter the place but later yielded after they threatened to force their way in.

Attha told the soldiers that Manun was not in Bangkok. But the officer's son apparently could not locate him.

The search of Manun's house was witnessed by a group of reporters and photographers.

Some of the soldiers snatched cameras from newsmen who took photos of the search at Manun's house. The rolls of film were taken away.

Before leaving, the soldiers used bayonets to flatten the tyres of a car parked inside Manun's house.

Attha told reporters that he was not excited. "This has happened to me before," he said.

Manun's whereabout has been shrouded in secrecy over the past few days. Before yesterday's military takeover, rumours had it that he had fled to Germany. The speculation has been denied by those close to the former Young Turk officer.

Manun is suspected of involvement in the alleged assassination plot against leading public figures in 1982. A plotter of two abortive coups in 1981 and 1985, Manun has denied the charges.

The National Peacekeeping Command, hours after it seized power yesterday, displayed on TV a videotaped "confession" by another key suspect in the alleged assassination plot, Col Bunsak Phocharoen.

Bunsak accused Manun of being the mastermind of the alleged plot and implied that the prime minister's aide might be trying to murder him.

Manun's alleged involvement in the controversial plot and deposed prime minister Chatchai Chunhawan's apparent attempt to protect him were cited by the military as a reason for the takeover.

'Crack' Unit Tracking Aide

BK2502030991 Bangkok THE NATION in English 25 Feb 91 p A2

[Excerpts] A crack military unit has been assigned to hunt down Maj Gen Manun Rupkachon, a former Young Turk leader wanted by the National Peacekeeping Command that seized power on Saturday, a high-ranking source said yesterday.

But army chief Suchinda Khraprayun denied a special team was sent out for Manun.

The source, who asked not to be named, said the manhunt to be carried out by the so-called Task Force 90, considered the military's best commando unit, was aimed at pre-empting any last-ditch attempt by Manun to regain influence over some military forces.

"(The command) wants to arrest Manun," said the source. "If he's found and resists arrest, drastic action might be taken." [passage omitted]

Supreme Command spokesman Lt Gen Narudon Detpradiyut also denied reports that Manun had fled the country. [passage omitted]

Narudon said the command had not yet considered legal action against those providing protection to Manun.

"We are not yet prepared to go that far," Narudon said.

National Peacekeeping Council Announcements

First Announcement on Takeover

BK2302084391 Bangkok Army Television Channel 5 in Thai 0752 GMT 23 Feb 91

[First announcement of the National Peacekeeping Council read by Supreme Commander General Sunthon Khongsomphong—live or recorded]

[Text] The National Peacekeeping Council [Khana Raksa Kwamsangop Riaproi Haengchat], consisting of members of the Army, Navy, Air Force, and police and civilians, has taken over national administrative control as of 1130 [0430 GMT] on 23 February 1991 and the situation is entirely under the control of the council. The people are asked not to panic and are to carry on their lives as normal. Soldiers and policemen are absolutely prohibited from any movement unless ordered by the head of the National Peacekeeping Council, and heads of the various units in the country must listen to and comply solely with the orders of the head of the National Peacekeeping Council. Everyone is to remain calm. The council will later explain the reasons that made this taking over of power necessary.

The council upholds royalty, and reverence to the king and queen as inviolable. One of the most important reasons for the takeover of power is to preserve the democratic-administrative system with the king as head of state forever. The king, queen, and members of the royal family have been given completely safe protection by the council.

The council guarantees that it will not change any institution unless it is in the interest of national security. The council will provide foreigners, particularly the diplomatic corps, consulates, and international organizations with firm protection. The council will continue to honor all obligations Thailand has with other countries.

Announced on 23 February 1991

[Signed] General Sunthon Khongsomphong, supreme commander and head of the council;
Gen. Suchinda Khraprayun, Army commander and deputy head of the council;
Admiral Praphat Kritsanachan, Navy commander and deputy head of the council;
Air Chief Marshal Kaset Rotchananin, Air Force commander and deputy head of the council;
Police General Sawat Amonwiwat, police director general and deputy head of the council;
Gen. Itsaraphong Nunphakdi, deputy Army commander and secretary general of the council.

Second Appoints Officials

BK2302100091 Bangkok Army Television Channel 5 in Thai 0840 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Second Announcement of the National Peacekeeping Council—live or recorded]

[Text] In the interest of orderly administration of the country and bringing the situation that could arise as the result of actions by people who harbor ill intentions toward the country back to normal as soon as possible, the following officials have been appointed to the commanding headquarters of the National Peacekeeping Council:

1. General Sunthon Khongsomphong, supreme commander and director for internal peacekeeping, as head of the council;
2. Gen. Suchinda Khraprayun, Army commander, as deputy head of the council;
3. Admiral Praphat Kritsanachan, Navy commander, as deputy head of the council;

4. Air Chief Marshal Kaset Rotchananin, Air Force commander, as deputy head of the council

5. Gen. Itsaraphong Nunphakdi, deputy Army commander, as secretary general of the council.

Third Ends Constitution, Legislature

BK2302103191 Bangkok Army Television Channel 5 in Thai 0848 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Third Announcement of the National Peacekeeping Council, signed by General Sunthon Khongsomphong, head of the National Peacekeeping Council—live or recorded]

[Text] In connection with the announcement of the National Peacekeeping Council, which consists of member of the Army, Navy, Air Force, and police and civilians, on taking over national administrative power, to create peace and order within the country, the council issues the following instructions:

1. The Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand of 1978 has been terminated.

2. The Senate, House of Representatives, and Cabinet have been terminated simultaneously with the Constitution.

3. The Privy Council continues its status and functions.

4. All courts continue to have their adjudication power in accordance with the law and announcements of the National Peace and Order Keeping Party.

Announced on 23 February 1991.

[Signed] General Sunthon Khongsomphong, head of the National Peacekeeping Council

Fourth Imposes Martial Law

BK2302101091 Bangkok Army Television Channel 5 in Thai 0857 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Fourth Announcement of the National Peacekeeping Council, signed by General Sunthon Khongsomphong, head of the National Peacekeeping Council—live or recorded]

[Text] To maintain peace for the benefit of the people throughout the country, the National Peacekeeping Council announces the imposition of martial law nationwide from 23 February 1991 at 1130 [0430 GMT].

Announced on 23 February 1991.

[Signed] General Sunthon Khongsomphong, head of the National Peacekeeping Council

Fifth Adds Council Deputy Leader

BK2302110491 Bangkok Army Television Channel 5 in Thai 1030 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Fifth Announcement of the National Peacekeeping Council, signed by General Sunthon Khongsomphong, head of the National Peacekeeping Council—live]

[Text] Per the second announcement of the National Peacekeeping Council appointing important officials to the council, issued at 1640 on 23 February, to ensure orderly administration of the country, the council appoints an additional important official:

Police General Sawat Amonwiwat, police director general, as deputy head of the National Peacekeeping Council.

This is effective immediately.

Announced on 23 February 1991.

[Signed] General Sunthon Khongsomphong, head of the National Peacekeeping Council

Sixth on Maintaining Foreign Policy

BK2302110391 Bangkok Army Television Channel 5 in Thai 1036 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Sixth Announcement of the National Peacekeeping Council, signed by General Sunthon Khongsomphong, head of the National Peacekeeping Council—live]

[Text] In connection with the national administrative power being taken over by the National Peacekeeping Council from 23 February, the party wishes to announce that it will adhere to the UN Charter and other international organizations [as heard]. In the interest of the country, it will preserve the rights and strictly comply with obligations to the treaties and agreements made with other countries on the basis of equality. It will promote and maintain existing good relations. As for foreigners, the diplomatic corps, consulates, embassies, and international organizations situated in Thailand, they will receive good protection from the party.

Announced on 23 February 1991.

[Signed] General Sunthon Khongsomphong, head of the National Peacekeeping Council

Seventh Bans Political Gatherings

BK2302112991 Bangkok Army Television Channel 5 in Thai 1043 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Seventh Announcement of the National Peacekeeping Council, signed by General Sunthon Khongsomphong, head of the National Peacekeeping Council—live]

[Text] In connection with the imposition of martial law from 23 February 1991 at 1130 [0430 GMT], to prevent obstacles to national administration during the imposition of martial law, political gatherings or meetings of five persons or more are prohibited. Offenders are liable to no more than six months imprisonment or 10,000 baht fine or both.

Announced on 23 February 1991.

[Signed] General Sunthon Khongsomphong, head of the National Peacekeeing Council

Eighth Transfers Powers to Council

BK2302131391 Bangkok Army Television Channel 5 in Thai 1000 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Eighth Announcement of the National Peacekeeping Council, signed by General Sunthon Khongsomphong, head of the National Peacekeeping Council—live]

[Text] Whereas certain laws specify the power of the prime minister and the carrying out of his duties in accordance with the law, in order to comply with such laws, the head of the National Peacekeeping Council, issues the following orders:

During the period that the prime minister's post is vacant, the power and duties stipulated by the law as belonging to the prime minister or the cabinet are to belong to the head of the National Peacekeeping Council or the persons assigned by him.

Announced on 23 February 1991.

[Signed] General Sunthon Khongsomphong, head of the National Peacekeeping Council.

Ninth Orders Army Broadcast Relays

BK2302111991 Bangkok Army Television Channel 5 in Thai 1050 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Ninth Announcement of the National Peacekeeping Council, signed by General Sunthon Khongsomphong, head of the National Peacekeeping Council—live]

[Text] To ensure speedy and continual dissemination of information to the people and communication between the central and regional zones, the National Peacekeeping Council issues the following order:

1. All radio stations, private or government owned, are to cease ordinary programs and only relay the broadcasts of the 1st Army Division radio station.

2. All television stations, private or government owned, are to cease ordinary programs and only relay the broadcast of the Army Television Station Channel 5.

This is effective immediately until otherwise instructed.

Announced on 23 February 1991.

[Signed] General Sunthon Khongsomphong, head of the National Peacekeeping Council

Tenth Assigns Ministerial Duties

BK2302130591 Bangkok Army Television Channel 5 in Thai 1103 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Tenth announcement of the National Peacekeeping Council, signed by General Sunthon Khongsomphong, head of the National Peacekeeping Council— live]

[Text] To ensure that the National Peacekeeping Council can operate systematically, fruitfully, and effectively, the following arrangement of work and duties and the assignment of responsibilities have been made:

1. Work arrangement.

The command headquarters of the National Peacekeeping Council consists of three working offices as follows: The National Policy Committee, the Advisory Board, and National Peacekeeping Board.

2. Duties.

Each office has the following duties:

2.1 The duties of the National Policy Committee are:

2.1.1 To designate both immediate and long-term policies for the administration of the country in the fields of politics, foreign affairs, economy, social psychology, military, and technology to be implemented by the National Peacekeeping Council.

2.1.2 To submit major policies which pertain to national security to His Majesty the King for royal consideration.

2.1.3 To coordinate with the appointed advisory team on security affairs in the deliberation and formulation of policies. To endorse all policies.

2.2 The Advisory Board has the following duties:

To provide advice for the National Policy Committee in connection with the formulation of security policies as requested by the committee or on its own initiative.

2.3 The National Peacekeeping Board has the following duties:

2.3.1 To administer the affairs of state in the best interest of the country and people in accordance with the policies laid down by the National Policy Committee.

2.3.2 To direct, supervise, and oversee the administration of ministries and departments under its responsibilities so that the latter can best serve the people's interests.

3. The assignment of responsibilities.

3.1 The Office of the Secretariat has the secretary as its supreme commander and is responsible for the operation of the following offices: The Prime Minister's Office, the National Auditing Council, and other agencies which have not been placed under jurisdiction of any specific office.

3.2 The Internal Security Operations Command [ISOC] has the ISOC director as its supreme commander and the units under its jurisdiction remain unchanged.

3.3 The security branch has the first deputy head of the National Peacekeeping Council as its supreme commander and has under its jurisdiction five working units namely the Defense Ministry, the Interior Ministry, the Communications Ministry, the Foreign Ministry, and the Ministry of Justice.

3.4 The economic branch has the second deputy head of the National Peacekeeping Council as its supreme commander and has under its jurisdiction four working units namely the Finance Ministry, the Commerce Ministry, the Industry Ministry, and Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives.

3.5 The social psychology and technology branch has the third head of the National Peacekeeping Council as its supreme commander and has under its jurisdiction four working units namely the Education Ministry, the Ministry of Public Health, the Ministry of Science and Technology, and the Bureau of State Universities.

Announced on 23 February 1990.

[Signed] General Sunthon Khongsomphong, head of the National Peacekeeping Council

11th Outlines Ministries' Control

BK2302134191 Bangkok Army Television Channel 5 in Thai 1117 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Eleventh announcement of the National Peacekeeping Council, signed by General Sunthon Khongsomphong, head of the National Peacekeeping Council—live]

[Text] To ensure orderly administration of all parts of the bureaucracy at the ministerial level and the chain of command directly under the National Peacekeeping Council, the following actions are to be taken:

1. The permanent secretary of every ministry and bureau is to be the commanding officer responsible for the work of his respective ministry and bureau, and the power and duties stipulated by law to belong to the minister are to belong to the respective permanent secretary.

2. The carrying out of duties of ministry and bureau permanent secretaries is to follow the chain of command of the National Peacekeeping Council by coming directly under the command of the respective deputy heads of the council who have been assigned the responsibility for the concerned ministries or bureau, and the relevant chain of command.

3. The heads of the agencies of the Prime Minister's Office and independent agencies not under command of any parent agencies are to come under direct command of the secretary general of the council, and the relevant chain of command.

4. The Internal Security Operations Command is to come under direct command of the head of the council.

Announced on 23 February 1991.

[Signed] General Sunthon Khongsomphong, head of the National Peacekeeping Council.

12th Summons Officials to Meeting

BK2302135691 Bangkok Army Television Channel 5 in Thai 1122 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Twelfth Announcement of the National Peacekeeping Council, signed by General Sunthon Khongsomphong, head of the National Peacekeeping Council—live]

[Text] In connection with the takeover of national administrative power by the National Peacekeeping Council on 23 February at 1130, to ensure orderly administration of every branch of the bureaucracy in accordance with the council's policy, officials at the levels of permanent secretary, director general, or the equivalent are to report to the Army Auditorium on Ratchasima Road, Bangkok, on 25 February at 0930.

Announced on 23 February 1991.

[Signed] General Sunthon Khongsomphong, head of the National Peace and Order Keeping Party.

13th Summons Bankers to Meeting

BK2302151291 Bangkok Army Television Channel 5 in Thai 1125 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Thirteenth Announcement of the National Peacekeeping Council, signed by General Sunthon Khongsomphong, head of the National Peacekeeping Council—live]

[Text] To ensure smooth continuation of the country's monetary and banking activities and fairness for operators of all commercial banks as well as the financial interests of the people and systematic and effective administration of the financial and monetary affairs by the National Peacekeeping Council, bankers, managing directors, and those in equivalent positions of all commercial banks are invited to hear the explanation of financial and monetary policy to be held at the Army Auditorium on Ratchasima Road, Bangkok, at 1400 on 25 February 1991.

Announced on 23 February 1991.

[Signed] General Sunthon Khongsomphong, head of the National Peacekeeping Council.

14th Outlines Press Censorship

BK2302125291 Bangkok Army Television Channel 5 in Thai 1204 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Fourteenth Announcement of the National Peacekeeping Council, signed by General Sunthon Khongsomphong, head of the National Peacekeeping Council—live]

[Text] To ensure factual reporting by the press and to prevent panic by the general public and in the interest of the general image of the country in the eyes of other countries, all publications are asked to cooperate as follows with the National Peacekeeping Council:

1. Owners and editors of all newspapers are to report on 24 February at 0830 to the Army Auditorium to receive a briefing on guidelines on reporting by the press.

2. To ensure that press reports are based on correct information and are not distorted, editors of all newspapers are to present reports which affect national administration by the party directly to the secretary general of the Party by 1000 daily. After approval the reports can then be published and disseminated.

3. The party will conduct a daily news conference to pool reporters at 0830. Every paper is encouraged to attend the news conference daily and/or receive news distribution from 24 February at the Army Auditorium.

4. Presentation of reports which were not censored by the party is subjected to the following actions: First violation is punishable by a three-day closure, second violation is punishable by a 7-day closure, and third violation by permanent closure until further notice.

Announced on 23 February 1991.

[Signed] General Sunthon Khongsomphong, head of the National Peacekeeping Council

15th Bans Hoarding, Price Increases

BK2302145991 Bangkok Army Television Channel 5 in Thai 1207 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Fifteenth Announcement of the National Peacekeeping Council, signed by General Sunthon Khongsomphong, head of the National Peacekeeping Council—live]

[Text] In connection with the National Peacekeeping Council taking national administrative power to maintain national stability and the well-being of the people, the party bans any persons from hoarding goods or increasing the prices of goods. Violations of this announcement will be regarded as an offense and will be liable to heavy punishment.

Announced on 23 February 1991.

[Signed] General Sunthon Khongsomphong, head of the National Peacekeeping Council

16th Summons Labor Leaders to Meeting

BK2302160191 Bangkok Army Television Channel 5 in Thai 1211 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Sixteenth Announcement by the National Peacekeeping Council, signed by General Sunthon Khongsomphong, head of the National Peacekeeping Council—live]

[Text] To ensure the smooth operation of all ministries and government agencies and state enterprises in line with the policy of the National Peacekeeping Council, leaders of labor councils and unions are therefore instructed to report in person to the auditorium of the Central Security Command on Si Ayutthaya Road, Bangkok at 0900 on 25 February, 1991 to hear a briefing on the situation.

Announced on 23 February 1991.

[Signed] General Sunthon Khongsomphong, head of the National Peace and Order Party.

17th Names Policy Committee, Advisers

BK2302195991 Bangkok Army Television Channel 5 in Thai 1900 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Seventeenth Announcement of the National Peacekeeping Council, signed by General Sunthon Khongsomphong, head of the National Peacekeeping Council—live]

[Text] In connection with the National Peacekeeping Council's tenth announcement on the arrangement of work and duties and assignment of responsibilities dated 23 February 1991, the National Policy Committee and the Advisory Team is therefore appointed, as follows:

1. The National Policy Committee

1.1 General Sunthon Khongsomphong, as chairman
1.2 General Suchinda Khraprayun, as vice chairman
1.3 Admiral Praphat Kritsanachan, as vice chairman
1.4 Air Chief Marshal Kaset Rotchananin, as vice chairman
1.5 General Itsaraphong Nunphakdi, as vice chairman
1.6 General Arun Pariwattham, as member
1.7 General Wimon Wongwanit, as member
1.8 General Wirot Saengsanit, as member
1.9 Admiral Wichet Karunyawanit, as member
1.10 Admiral Somphong Kamon-ngam, as member
1.11 Air Chief Marshal Suthep Theppharak, as member
1.12 Air Chief Marshal Anan Kalintha, as member
1.13 Police General Sawat Amonwiwat, as member
1.14 Charoenchit Na Songkhla, as member
1.15 Air Chief Marshal Phisit Salikhup, as member and secretary

2. The Advisory Team

2.1 Bunchana Atthakon, as chairman
2.2 Praphat Uaichai, as vice chairman
2.3 General Sitthi Chirarot, as vice chairman

Military Advisers

2.4 General Chatchom Kanlong, as member
2.5 General Banchop Bunnak, as member
2.6 Admiral Chat Ditthabanchong, as member
2.7 Air Chief Marshal Praphan Thupatemi, as member

Political and Foreign Affairs Advisers

2.8 Ukrit Mongkhonnawin, as member
2.9 Asa Sarasin, as member
2.10 Michai Ruchuphan, as member
2.11 Komen Phattharaphirom, as member
2.12 Sub Lieutenant Praphat Limpaphan, as member

Economic and Fiscal Advisers

2.13 Amaret Sila-on, as member
2.14 Wiraphong Ramangkun, as member
2.15 Chawalit Thanachanan, as member
2.16 Anan Panyarachun, as member
2.17 Pharon Itsarasena, as member
2.18 Suthi Singsane, as member
2.19 Police General Phao Sarasin, as member
2.20 Kasem Chatikawanit, as member
2.21 Sano Unakun, as member

Socio-Psychology Advisers

2.22 Somchai Wutthipricha, as member
2.23 Phichai Watsanasong, as member
2.24 Phairot Ningsanon, as member
2.25 Nithet Sunthonphithak, as member
2.26 Suwan Chansom, as member
2.27 Uthai Sutsuk, as member
2.28 Kowit Woraphiphat, as member

Technology Advisers

2.29 Anat Aphaphirom, as member
2.30 Sa-nga Sapphasi, as member
2.31 Wira Pittarachat, as member
2.32 Phaibun Limpaphayom, as member
2.33 Suwit Chutrakun, as member
2.34 Sathaphon Kawittanon, as member

Announced on 23 February 1991.

[Signed] General Sunthon Khongsomphong, head of the National Peace and Order Keeping Party.

18th Permits Regular TV Programs

BK2302180191 Bangkok Army Television Channel 5 in Thai 1720 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Eighteenth Announcement of the National Peacekeeping Council, signed by General Sunthon Khongsomphong, head of the National Peacekeeping Council—live]

[Text] To enable people to follow other news reports and normal television programs, television channels 3, 7, 9, and 11 are permitted to present their normal programs, with the provision that they must follow every news report carried by Army Television Channel 5 and relay every order, announcement, or communique of the National Peacekeeping Council.

Announced on 23 February 1991.

[Signed] General Sunthon Khongsomphong, head of the National Peacekeeping Council

19th Postpones Local Elections

BK2302180991 Bangkok Army Television Channel 5 in Thai 1725 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Nineteenth Announcement by the National Peacekeeping Council, signed by General Sunthon Khongsomphong, head of the National Peacekeeping Council—live]

[Text] In connection with the National Peacekeeping Council's announcement banning political gatherings or meetings of more than five persons at any places, the elections for members of provincial adminstrative councils and municipal administrative councils and members of the sanitation area administrative committees nationwide are postponed indefinitely until further notice. The existing councils will continue to perform their duties. In the case of vacancies, the provincial governors are entitled to appoint qualified persons to fill them.

Announced on 23 February 1991.

[Signed] General Sunthon Khongsomphong, head of the National Peacekeeping Council.

20th Prohibits Political Activities

BK2302182391 Bangkok Army Television Channel 5 in Thai 1757 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Twentieth Announcement of the National Peacekeeping Council, signed by General Sunthon Khongsomphong, head of the National Peacekeeping Council—live]

[Text] Considering the Third Announcement issued by the National Peacekeeping Council dated 23 February 1991 abolishing the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand of 1978, the Seventh Announcement prohibiting any political gathering or meeting, and the desire of the Council to maintain and continue the democratic administrative system with the King as the head of state after the situation has returned to normal, the Council therefore has not yet abrogated the Political Parties Act of 1981 to enable political parties to continue to exist. However, to benefit the maintenance of peace and order, the Council prohibits the existing political parties from convening meetings or launching any political activity. The formation and registration of political parties are also suspended temporarily until further notice. This announcement is effective immediately.

Announced on 23 February 1991.

[Signed] General Sunthon Khongsomphong, head of the National Peacekeeping Council

21st Transfers Police Official

BK2402101491 Bangkok Army Television Channel 5 in Thai 0930 GMT 24 Feb 91

[Twenty-first Announcement of the National Peacekeeping Council, signed by General Sunthon Khongsomphong, head of the National Peacekeeping Council—live]

[Text] For more efficiency and suitability of the operations of the Police Department, the council therefore issues an order for Police General Sanong Watthanawarangkun, acting deputy director general of the Police Department, to be provisionally attached to the Prime Minister's Office.

This order takes effect immediately.

Announced on 24 February 1991.

[Signed] General Sunthon Khongsomphong, head of the National Peace and Order Keeping Party.

22d Allows Committees To Continue Duties

BK2402123191 Bangkok Army Television Channel 5 in Thai 1012 GMT 24 Feb 91

[Twenty-second Announcement of the National Peacekeeping Council, signed by General Sunthon Khongsomphong, head of the National Peacekeeping Council—live]

[Text] The issuance of the Third Announcement of the National Peacekeeping Council dated 23 February 1991 terminated the existence of the cabinet, the committees appointed by the cabinet, the prime minister, or the minister in charge of the respective committee, except the committees appointed by law. Regarding that announcement:

In order that the works of such committees will not be stopped or or delayed, the party has therefore decided to allow such committees to maintain and continue to perform their duties, unless the government sector, which proposed the setting up of the committee, considers that the committee should be cancelled or changed. In doing so, the permanent secretary of the respective ministry or bureau is authorized to submit a proposal for consideration by the head of the security section, the head of the social, psychological, and technological section, the head of the economic section, and the secretary general of the National Peacekeeping Council, who is in charge of the works of each ministry and bureau.

In the case of a committee which was chaired by the prime minister, he will be replaced by the head of the National Peacekeeping Council or the person assigned by the head of the National Peacekeeping Council.

Announced on 24 February 1991

[Signed] General Sunthon Khongsomphong, head of the National Peacekeeping Council

23d Lifts Press Controls

BK2402124691 Bangkok Army Television Channel 5 in Thai 1107 GMT 24 Feb 91

[Twenty-third Announcement of the National Peacekeeping Council, signed by General Sunthon Khongsomphong, head of the National Peacekeeping Council—live]

[Text] With reference to the 14th Announcement of the National Peacekeeping Council on news reporting and control of the press, the National Peacekeeping Council, after observing the full cooperation given to the National Peacekeeping Council all along by all newspapers, has thus lifted the 14th Announcement as of now.

The National Peacekeeping Council hopes that it will continue to receive such cooperation from all newspapers.

Announced on 24 February 1991

[Signed] General Sunthon Khongsomphong, head of the National Peacekeeping Council

24th Lifts Controls on Radio, TV

BK2402131791 Bangkok Army Television Channel 5 in Thai 1132 GMT 24 Feb 91

[Twenty-fourth announcement of the National Peacekeeping Council, signed by General Sunthon Khongsomphong, head of the National Peacekeeping Council—live]

[Text] Regarding the issuance of the ninth announcement of the National Peacekeeping Council on radio and television broadcasting, which ordered all radio and television stations, whether government or private owned, to cease their regular programs and only relay the broadcast of the 1st Army Division's radio station and relay the programming of Army Television Channel 5 until otherwise instructed: Now that the situation has returned to normal, all radio and television stations are therefore allowed to return to their normal programming.

This takes effect immediately.

Announced on 24 February 1991

[Signed] General Sunthon Khongsomphong, head of the National Peacekeeping Council

26th Gives Assests Committee Powers

BK2502112491 Bangkok Army Television Channel 5 in Thai 0530 GMT 25 Feb 91

[Twenty-Sixth Announcement of the National Peacekeeping Council; signed by General Sunthon Khongsomphong, head of the National Peacekeeping Council—live or recorded]

[Text] As stated in its communique that rampant corruption by politicians in power was one of the reasons for the takeover of administrative power, the National Peacekeeping Council is intent on taking drastic action to deal with this problem. There is clear evidence that a large number of politicians, who were former Cabinet ministers or who held other political positions, have become unusually wealthy, more so than any person with an honest profession could be. In order to prevent dishonest people from making use of benefits earned from corruption and to prevent the transfer or transaction of assets illegally acquired by them, the following measures will be implemented:

1. A committee will be set up for verification of assets. It comprises:

1.1 General Sitthi Chirarot as chairman;
1.2 Suthi Akatsaroek as vice chairman;
1.3 Mongkhon Pao-in as member;
1.4 Phaisan Kumalawisai as member;
1.5 Suchat Traiprasit as member;
1.6 Police Lieutenant General Wirot Pao-in as member;
1.7 Chaiyakhet Sunthonphiphit as member and secretary.

2. The Assets Verification Committee [Khana Kammakan Truatsop Sapsin] has the authority and duty to make a list of politicians who are wealthier than anyone with an honest profession could be. Their names will be announced to the public, and their assets and all other properties believed to belong to them will be frozen. Investigations will be made to determine how those people have acquired those properties, and whether they have legally or illegally obtained them. The committee is empowered to order confiscation of those assets, or to impound them in order to prevent transfer or transaction. In carrying out their duties, the members of the Assets Verification Committee will not be subject to any kind of legal action, civil or criminal.

3. All commercial banks, financial institutions, and land officials throughout the kingdom will check assets of the individuals whose names are given to them by the Assets Verification Committee. Those assets will be strictly impounded to prevent transfer or transaction. A report on the findings will be submitted to the Assets Verification Committee, listed under No. 1 above, within 7 days after receiving notification from the Assets Verification Committee.

4. In performing their duties under this announcement, the chairman of the Assets Verification Committee, or officials assigned by the committee, are given the following powers: 4.1 They can, in writing, request from official units, state agencies, or state enterprises information about official operations or other functions. 4.2 They can, in writing, summon the individuals involved in the cases under investigation to give statements, ask for the accounts of the assets, documents, or any objects that are useful for the investigation, and they can order individuals concerned to give statements or hand over property accounts or documents, or objects that are useful to the investigation, to the chairman of the Assets Verification Committee, or officials assigned by written order.

4.3 They can enter a place, from sunrise to sunset, or during office hours, in order to check the accounts, or documents, or any other evidence of the individuals described under No. 2 above. In this case, officials are empowered to order personnel at that spot to give necessary service to them in order to facilitate the checking or the search. They are also empowered to confiscate or impound the accounts, documents, or other evidence for verification.

5. The Assets Verification Committee will appoint a subcommittee and officials deemed necessary for the investigation, or any kind of action to be taken, as assigned by the Assets Verification Committee.

6. Any assets determined by the Assets Verification Committee to be illegally acquired, or the accumulated amounts of which are unusual, will be confiscated as national property, unless the persons under accusation can prove to the Assets Verification Committee that their assets were honestly acquired. This must be completed within 15 days from the day they are notified by the Assets Verification Committee of its decision.

7. In performing their duties under this announcement, the chairman of the committee and members of the subcommittee of the Assets Verification Committee, as well as its officials and employees, will have the status of officials under the criminal code. In performing their duties, the officials must show their identity cards to those they contact.

8. Those having in their possession the assets belonging to the individuals charged by the Assets Verification Committee, under No. 2 above, no matter under what conditions, will have to report to the members and secretary of the Assets Verification Committee within 15 days from the day the committee makes public the names. The assets confiscated as national property under No. 6 will be handed to the Finance Ministry by the committee. Concerning immovable property, the committee will hand over documents to land officers for ownership transfer under the Land Act and make it the property of the Finance Ministry.

9. If it is found that the individuals investigated by the Assets Verification Committee under No. 2 above have illegally acquired the property, and, in addition, have committed offences under the criminal code, the chairman of the Assets Verification Committee will hand over the cases to authorities concerned to take further action according to their responsibilities.

10. A person who fails to report the ownership of assets under No. 8 will be liable to a maximum of two years imprisonment, or a fine of not more than 40,000 baht, or both.

11. A person who fails to report or to hand over accounts, documents, or objects requested by the authorities under No. 4 above will be liable to a maximum of six months imprisonment or a fine of not more than 10,000 baht, or both.

Announced on 25 February 1991

[Signed] General Sunthon Khongsomphong, head of the National Peacekeeping Council

27th on Ban on Troop Movements

BK2502150991 Bangkok Army Television Channel 5 in Thai 1415 GMT 25 Feb 91

[Twenty-seventh Announcement of the National Peacekeeping Council; signed by General Sunthon Khongsomphong, leader of the National Peacekeeping Council—live]

[Text] With reference to the first announcement of the National Peacekeeping Council strictly prohibiting movements of soldiers and police forces unless ordered by the leader of the National Peacekeeping Council, now that the situation has generally returned to normal, the prohibition has thus been relaxed, and movement of soldiers and policemen is allowed under the following conditions:

1. Soldiers and policemen can be moved to places for official duties related to training and education of their respective units or academies.

2. Soldiers and policemen can be moved to places for official field duties as ordered by their superiors.

3. Each time movements in strength under Nos. 1 and 2 above are made, advance notice must be given to local units in charge of the areas.

Announced on 25 February 1991.

[Signed] General Sunthon Khongsomphong, leader of the National Peacekeeping Council

28th on Labor Committees

BK2502160091 Bangkok Army Television Channel 5 in Thai 1505 GMT 25 Feb 91

[Twenty-eighth Announcement of the National Peacekeeping Council; signed by General Sunthon Khongsomphong, leader of the National Peacekeeping Council—live]

[Text] The National Peacekeeping Council has seized power and declared martial law as stipulated in its fourth announcement on enforcement of martial law in the entire kingdom issued on 23 February 1991. In order to settle the labor disputes, still unresolved by Article 22, Section 3, of the Labor Relations Act of Buddhist Era [B.E.] 2518, involving particular localities or certain business operations, and in order to facilitate arbitration of the disputes in order to settle them quickly and appropriately, the National Peacekeeping Council hereby orders the permanent secretary who is empowered with the authority of the minister to appoint local labor arbitration committees by virtue of Article 25 of the Labor Relations Act of B.E. 2518. The arbitration ruled out by the committees will be final. Those submitting the complaints and those receiving the complaints must conform to the arbitration.

Announced on 25 February 1991.

[Signed] General Sunthon Khongsomphong, leader of the National Peacekeeping Council

National Peacekeeping Council Communiques

1st Explains Reasons for Coup

BK2302122191 Bangkok Army Television Channel 5 in Thai 0915 GMT 23 Feb 91

[First Communique of the National Peacekeeping Council; signed by General Sunthon Khonsomphong, head of the National Peacekeeping Council; read by unidentified Army lieutenant general—live]

[Text] Following the National Peacekeeping Council's taking over the administrative power of the country since 1130 on 23 February 1991, so that the public be informed of the facts, reasons, and neccessity of taking over the national administration, the National Peacekeeping Council desires to make the following points:

The first reason is the act of corruption. The national administrative party has taken the opportunity to make use of its political posts and authority to vigorously and unprecedentedly seek benefit for itself and its companions. It has become normal practice for most of the Cabinet ministers to seek money to build up their status and wealth in order to support their political power base. During the consideration of potential large- and medium-scale projects, politicians at the government level played a role in pushing for them to materialize by claiming that the public will benefit from each project. In fact, it is only a sophisticated way to seek benefits. Despite knowledge of extensive corruption among the politicians at the Cabinet level and among government officials and certain high-ranking state enterprise officials, the prime minister as head of the government has not seriously attempted to solve the problem. Moreover, the prime minister has even committed such inappropriate acts himself, by claiming various reasons to conceal corruption. To prove the innocence of the alleged suspects, he says that if anyone is suspected of committing corrupt actions written documentation must be produced as evidence. Corruption has escalated quickly and vigorously, beyond anyone's ability to stop its spread. If this practice is allowed to continue, it may cause very serious misfortunes for the country. Therefore this is the first reason that necessitates the party taking over the national administrative power.

The second reason is that political appointees have used power and authority to pressure honest career government officials. Since political appointees have the highest role and greatest power in each government sector, they have taken the opportunity to realize political influence, and seek more supporters to build up voting bases to earn benefits for themselves and their supporters. This has adversely affected honest career government officials, who refuse to become the instruments of politicians, by putting an end to progress in their careers. Those who refused to comply with political appointees' intentions were harassed and bullied. Several of them had to resign from government service. These are great setbacks for career government officials who have no way to fight against them. This practice destroys the morale and tradition of government officials. This problem is therefore the second reason for the takeover of the national administration.

The third reason is that the government is a parliamentary dictatorship. The prime minister, as head of the government, has cooperated with the political parties in the coalition and the prime minister's advisory team at Ban Phitsanuloke in employing sophisticated political ploys to create a false image, luring the public into believing that the government is administering the country according to democratic norms while, in fact, it is using tricks to gain benefits. It has become obvious to the public that this government has carried out political activities for its own benefit. Personal gain has become the main objective for politicians at the Cabinet level, who perform administrative duties, and for the members of parliament, who are in the legislative sector, thus leading the country toward a system of parliamentary dictatorship. Using democracy to hide its real actions, the government has completely taken administrative power into its own hands. In the process, the government has placed associates of the prime minister in all the key political posts and in career government positions. This has paved the way for them to earn massive personal gain without opposition from anyone. This is a serious threat to the democratic system with the king as head of state.

The fourth reason is that there is an attempt to destroy the military institution. The military institution is the only one of career government branches which has not succumbed to the political influence of politicians and political parties. Although the Chatchai government has sought in every way to destroy the solidarity and unity of the Armed Forces, it has failed to do so. The government has always been in confrontation with the military, as in the case of the Little Duck Company, the mobile transmission truck, the non-dismissal of Police Captain Chaloem Yubamrung from a ministerial post to maintain a gentlemen's agreement with the military, and the release of news to bring about the dismissal of military leaders. The military can no longer tolerate such schemes to destroy the military institution. This is another important reason for the takeover.

The fifth reason is that there is a distortion of the plot to overthrow the institution of the monarchy. In 1982—about nine years ago—Major General Manun Rupkhachon and his associates mapped out plans to destroy the Chakri Dynasty in order to eradicate the institution of the monarchy, and change the ruling system to one that he and his party had set up. However, the vicious plot failed. Major General Manun and 43 of his companions were arrested. With the assistance of a group of persons with political influence they were bailed out and were able to stage three more coups. Morever, Manun was helped and promoted by Prime Minister General Chatchai Chunhawan and rose quickly through the ranks to the rank of general in the military. Despite Manun's staging a coup and his alleged attempt to assassinate prominent figures, especially the attempt to overthrow the institution of the monarchy, Gen Chatchai Chunhawan tried to distort the fact and pass the blame onto others. This incensed citizens loyal to the monarchy. The act of disloyalty is the most important issue which the military can no longer tolerate.

The military has held consultations among the three Armed Forces and the civil service and Police Department to take over the administration of the country.

Given these five reasons cited above, the National Peacekeeping Council can no longer allow such a serious situation to continue. In order to maintain the security of the institutions of the nation, religion, monarchy, and the democratic system with the king as head of state, the party deems it necessary to control the national administration. The National Peacekeeping Council will carry out operations to return the administrative system to normal as soon as possible. It is for these reasons that the party is issuing this communique to inform the public.

Announced on 23 February 1991

[Signed by] General Sunthon Khonsomphong, head of the National Peacekeeping Council

2d on Sunthorn Royal Audience

BK2302155391 Bangkok Army Television Channel 5 in Thai 1535 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Second Communique of the National Peacekeeping Council; signed by General Itsaraphong Nunphakdi, secretary general of the National Peacekeeping Council—live]

[Text] Concerning the takeover of national administrative power by the National Peacekeeping Council, General Sunthon Khongsomphong, head of the National Peacekeeping Council, and his group have traveled to have an audience with his majesty the king in order to report on the situation and the facts to the head of state at the Phuphin Ratchaniwet Palace in Chiang Mai Province.

Moreover, the National Peacekeeping Council has arranged forces to give full protection to their majesties the king and queen and all members of the royal family.

The public is hereby informed.

Announced on 23 February 1991

[Signed] General Itsaraphong Nunphakdi, the secretary general of the National Peacekeeping Council

3d on Completion of Report to King

BK2302174391 Bangkok Army Television Channel 5 in Thai 1731 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Third Communique of the National Peacekeeping Council; signed by General Itsaraphong Nunphakdi, secretary general of the National Peacekeeping Council—live]

[Text] Whereas the head of the National Peacekeeping Council and his delegation have traveled to have an audience with the king at Phuphing Ratchaniwet Palace, Chiang Mai Province, to report to him on the situation and facts, the head of the council and his delegation have completed their report to the king. The public is hereby informed.

Announced on 23 February 1991

[Signed] General Itsaraphong Nunphakdi, secretary general of the National Peacekeeping Council

4th on Workers' Hardship

BK2302191591 Bangkok Army Television Channel 5 in Thai 1852 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Fourth Communique of the National Peacekeeping Council; signed by General Sunthon Khongsomphong, head of the National Peacekeeping Council—live]

[Text] It has been known that fraternal workers are suffering hardship concerning the cost of living and are seeking an increase of the minimum wage. In this connection, the National Peacekeeping Council is aware of this hardship of workers and sympathizes with them a great deal, and it is considering assistance to alleviate this hardship. However, because the country's peace and order problem is in the process of being solved, the workers are, therefore, urged to remain in peace and refrain from any activity to press their demand, because it could give the people who harbor ill intention toward the country an opportunity to create unrest. The council will consider appropriate measures to help quickly alleviate the hardship of the fraternal workers.

Announced on 23 February 1991.

[Signed] General Sunthon Khongsomphong, head of the National Peacekeeping Council

5th on Student Participation

BK2402131691 Bangkok Army Television Channel 5 in Thai 1205 GMT 24 Feb 91

[Fifth Communique of the National Peacekeeping Council; signed by General Sunthon Khongsomphong, head of the National Peacekeeping Council—live]

[Text] With its awareness of their significant role in national development, the National Peacekeeping Council deems it appropriate to have students and the intellectuals, who represent a pure power, take part in political affairs within the framework of the democratic system under the king as head of state, especially the contribution they may make in making the forthcoming general elections fair, honest, and free from the practice of vote buying or the use of influence. Concerning any opinions the students may have for the development of politics under the democratic system with the king as head of state, they are invited to submit their suggestions to the Secretariat of the National Peacekeeping Council, Suan Runrudi, Dusit District, Bangkok Metropolis, area code 10300.

This is for the information of the public.

Announced on 24 February 1991

[Signed] General Sunthon Khongsomphong, head of the National Peacekeeping Council

Order Outlines Martial Law Responsibilities

BK2402124391 Bangkok Army Television Channel 5 in Thai 1012 GMT 24 Feb 91

[Order No. 1/1991; issued on 24 February; signed by General Sunthon Khongsomphong, head of the National Peacekeeping Council—live or recorded]

[Text] Following the enforcement of martial law throughout the kingdom as of 1130 on 23 February 1991, in order to facilitate the operation, prevention, and suppression [as heard], and the maintenance of law and order by the military, it is deemed necessary to appoint military personnel to execute power under martial law, and the following officers are named in charge of it under Martial Law of 1991.

1.1 **Supreme Command**: The supreme commander is the officer in charge of executing the power under the Martial Law of 1991 throughout the kingdom.

1.2 **Army**:
1.2.1 The Army commander in chief is the officer in charge executing power under the Martial Law of 1991 in the entire kingdom.
1.2.2 The commanders of the military regions, or officers assigned by them, are in charge of executing power under the Martial Law of 1991 in their respective military regions.

1.3 **Navy**: The Navy commander in chief, or officer assigned by him, will execute power under the Martial Law of 1991 in all areas in the jurisdiction of the Navy.

1.4 **Air Force**: The Air Force commander in chief, or the officer assigned by him, will execute power under the Martial Law 1991 in all areas under jurisdiction of the Air Force.

2. In case there is an overlapping in the use of power under numbers 1.2, 1.3, and 1.4, military personnel should coordinate with field officials as deemed necessary.

3. In case there is a need for recruitment or confiscation in the execution of power by military officers under the Martial Law of 1991 as indicated in number 1.2, military personnel in charge must seek permission from the supreme commander first. Action can be taken after authorization.

This is to take effect immediately.

Ordered on 24 February 1991

[Signed by] General Sunthon Khongsomphong, head of the National Peacekeeping Council.

Sunthon Statement Reveals Plot Against Monarchy

BK2302153191 Bangkok Army Television Channel 5 in Thai 1330 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Statement by General Sunthon Khongsomphong, head of the National Peacekeeping Council—live]

[Text] Respected fraternal Thai people, in my position as head of the National Peacekeeping Council, I, General Sunthon Khongsomphong, have a very important issue to inform you about: an attempt to topple the institution of the monarchy, which has been appearing the press. I am confident that every citizen—civilian official, policeman, soldier, or ordinary citizen—is loyal to the king, queen, and the royal family members and is ready to sacrifice his life to preserve the stability of the monarchic institution.

Respected fraternal people, the king and queen are truly the center of the souls and minds of the people throughout the country. To date, they have constantly devoted their bodies and minds to the cause of the people and the country. Despite difficulties in solving the problems in order to bring the benefits of development to the people, they have never lost determination but have maintained a great desire to help the people and effectively relieve their plight. There are no comparable kings and queens anywhere in the world. For this reason, people have expressed their loyalty to their majesties at all times.

However, a group of people, who has no awareness of their majesties' kindness, concocted an evil plot about nine years ago to topple the institution of the monarchy. Although that attempt failed, their grudge and malicious desire persisted unabated. They continued to try to topple the institution of the monarchy.

The loyal Thai people have continuously followed the activities of this group of people and the progress of the legal process against it in order to speed up the process and bring the culprits to justice. However, the investigation process proceeded very slowly and with great difficulty because a group of influential people in the government who wield political power and influence sought to discourage and delay the process and assist the culprits.

The action of the group of evil plotters and the group of people who assist it has caused acute disunity and hurt the feelings of the people throughout the country, as well as undermined the democratic administrative system with a king as head of state. The National Peacekeeping Council feels that it is extremely necessary to inform the people of the relevant facts, because it is evident that this group of people has plotted to divert its guilt to other people whom it views as its political enemy, hoping to unfairly destroy other people. Therefore, to prevent distortion of facts and diversion of guilt, I take this opportunity to inform the people of the facts.

Based on its honor and prestige, the National Peacekeeping Council assures that the disclosure of facts and confessions of the persons who committed the wrongdoing, who have repented, are true and contain no fabrications. I condemn the action of the group of evil plotters and the group of people which helps in distorting the facts. The National Peacekeeping Council will do everything to achieve correctness and justice in order to protect the institution of the monarchy until the end.

Military, Police Officers Appear With Gen Sunthon

BK2302085291 Bangkok Army Television Channel 5 in Thai 0805 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Editorial Report] Bangkok Army Television Channel 5 in Thai at 0752 GMT on 23 February shows the leaders of the National Peacekeeping Council sitting at a table as Supreme Commander General Sunthon Khongsomphong delivers his statement that "the National Peacekeeping Council has taken power." Geneneral Sunthon is seated in the middle. Seated at his left is Air Force Commander Air Chief Marshal Kaset Rotchananin and then Police Department Director General Police General Sawat Amonwiwat; seated to his right is Army Commander General Suchinda Khraprayun and then Navy Commander Admiral Praphat Kritsanachan.

The camera pans to the left and right showing other high-ranking police and military officers seated at a long U-shaped table at either side of the above-mentioned 5 officers, and more high-ranking police and military officers seated in two rows each on the right and left behind the long U-shaped table.

On the wall behind Gen. Sunthon are pictures of the king and queen of Thailand and the national flag.

General Sunthon Gives 25 Feb Interview

BK2502051291 Bangkok Domestic Service in Thai 0430 GMT 25 Feb 91

[Interview with General Sunthon Khongsomphong, head of the National Peacekeeping Council, with unidentified correspondent, following meeting with ministerial heads at Army Meeting Hall on 25 February—recorded]

[Text] [Sunthon, in progress] ...the basic economic problems will be solved first, because the export and import sides of the economy are already quite good. We will try to reduce monopoly.

[Correspondent] There has been an effect on the stock market; trading dropped this morning.

[Sunthon] Did it drop? We will have to invite the people involved to a consultation in order to urgently resolve the issue.

[Correspondent] There will be an election six months after formation of the provisional government, can you confirm this?

[Sunthon] You stand to be corrected. The drafting of the constitution will be completed within six months, after that a general election will be arranged.

[Correspondent] [Words indistinct] It might not be completed in six months.

[Sunthon] We will try to speed it up.

[Correspondent] Hastiness might bring negative results, don't you think?

[Sunthon] We do not want people to become tired of waiting. We will try, we might meet three times a week instead of once a week in order to speed things up.

[Correspondent] The drafting of the constitution must be completed six months after formation of the provisional government, correct?

[Sunthon] We will try to complete it in approximately six months. It is not a must, it is an approximate time.

Further on Interview

BK2502080591 Bangkok Domestic Service in Thai 0530 GMT 25 Feb 91

[Report on interview with General Sunthon Khongsomphong, head of the National Peacekeeping Council, by unidentified correspondent, following a meeting with ministerial heads at Army Meeting Hall on 25 February]

[Excerpt] [Passage omitted] [Begin recording] [Correspondent] You mentioned that The National Peacekeeping Council will remain to advise the provisional government during its tenure. What will be the duty of the council after the general election?

[Sunthon] It will probably dissolve itself. After we restore peace and order to the country we should return to our normal duties. [Question interrupted by Sunthon] We will try to perform our tasks as quickly as possible. Do not set a specific time because unforeseen obstacles could arise. Suppose a person accepts our approach to work but withdraws himself just as he is about to begin his job. In such a case we will have to approach someone else.

[Correspondent] Have you approached anyone so far?

[Sunthon] Yes, some of them.

[Correspondent] Has the person to be named prime minister been approached?

[Sunthon] I don't know. [laughter]

[Correspondent] Who will represent the National Peacekeeping Council in approaching the prospective head of government. I know that Gen. Suchinda is responsible for the Foreign Ministry.

[Sunthon] The ministry permanent secretaries have been given the responsibility of respective ministries.

[Correspondent] Will a permanent secretary be charged with representing the country in an international meeting?

[Sunthon] It depends whether the meeting specifies the person attending. If it is at the national level, we can send the permanent secretary. If it specifies that the attendant must hold a ministerial level position, we will have to consider whether we should attend.

[Correspondent] It was mentioned that the creation of understanding with foreign countries is a first priority. How does the National Peacekeeping Council plan to create confidence among foreign investors?

[Sunthon] Nothing will change. We will not tamper with anything. We will allow it to continue as usual. [end recording]

Regarding Gen. Chatchai Chunhawan and Gen. Athit Kamlang-ek, who are being detained by the military, they will be released after the situation returns to normal because they did nothing wrong. Gen. Sunthon said:

[Sunthon] We have not subjected them to any undesirable action.

[Correspondent] What about Gen. Athit?

[Sunthon] His case and Gen. Chatchai's are the same.

[Question indistinct]

[Sunthon] They have committed no wrong.

[Correspondent] Will any assistance be given to the Interior Ministry permanent secretary [words indistinct]?

[Sunthon] He remains at the house. He has not showed up.

[Correspondent] What action will be taken against the people who have been involved, such as Major General Manun and Kraisak?

[Sunthon] Maj. Gen. Manun is liable to being prosecuted on two charges. First, we will check whether he was away without leave. If so, he will be punished. The other is his involvement in the assassination attempts. The investigation reports have clearly implicated him. But we will not interfere in the trial process; we will merely speed up the case in order to bring the culprits to justice.

[Correspondent] How many people have warrants issued for their arrest?

[Sunthon] Forty-three altogether.

[Correspondent] Is the press report about activities of some individuals being monitored true?

[Sunthon] Who are the targets?

[Correspondent] Some members of Gen. Chatchai's advisory team at Ban Phitsanulok, for example.

[Sunthon] We have not ordered their detention, we merely instructed that they not leave the country by land, sea, or air. [end recording]

General Suchinda Gives News Conference

Part 1

BK2402095991 Bangkok Army Television Channel 5 in Thai 0518 GMT 24 Feb 91

[First part of news conference by General Suchinda Khraprayun, deputy head of the National Peacekeeping Council, to a group of editors and owners of newspapers at the Army Meeting Hall on 24 February "on guidelines for news reporting, which should be based on the principle of correctness, without any distortion which might negatively affect the national administration"—recorded]

[Text] [Suchinda] We invited the owners and editors of newspapers here today for an explanation concerning the purpose for taking power from the government by the National Peacekeeping Council. As the general public and the press are well aware, there has been widespread corruption in government circles. Even the prime minister, General Chatchai Chunhawan, himself admitted it. He stated before the commanders of the Armed Forces, the Army, Navy, Air Force, and the supreme commander, many times, that there has been widespread corruption in the existing political party system. Every political party is doing its best to mobilize funds for use in the general elections. We think that if this is allowed to continue, the system will cause our country to collapse.

Once elected, political parties or politicians will only think about making money for their respective parties so that they will again win future elections. There has already been a term calling the cabinet a buffet cabinet, meaning that they are in politics just to grab. And that is dangerous for the democratic system. We must do something to change it and make our democray advance in the right direction. Yet, it might be impossible to make a correction through the parliamentary process. And that is an important reason for the takeover.

Concerning this, we have taken into consideration and know that any action taken would have an impact on the economy. We carefully studied how to make it least affect the economy. There could be a stalemate, for a short time, but that short stalemate should permit us to look forward to better prospects in the future. That is why we have to make a sacrifice. We have carefully studied the effects on the economy.

Another important point is the problem that affects the monarchical institution. People trusted by the government have turned out to be harmful to the monarchical institution. We have already clarified this in statements on television. This is what the National Peacekeeping Council cannot tolerate. We cannot tolerate protection for the culprits through a distortion of the case.

Now up to this point, I would like to ask of you....[changes thought] First of all, I would like to thank all newspapers for their cooperation. What I do not want to happen.... [changes thought] Well, we realize that the action taken would more or less affect the economy. Therefore we want cooperation from newspapers concerning news reporting. Please cooperate with us, as you already know our intentions. We would like to build a democratic system that is better than the one we had—that means, a system deprived of all the loopholes of the past. We want this in a matter of a short time. We will return power to a legitimate government at the soonest possible date. After this, there will be another news conference by the general of the National Peacekeeping Council. What I, therefore, would like to ask from all newspapers is that news reporting be constructive and contribute to peace in the country. It should contritute to an improvement in the country's economic atmosphere. There should be no disruption or damage to it. We want your cooperation.

Now, concerning the order requiring newspapers to seek permission from our directorate before publishing any news that might affect national administration, I feel this might be difficult for newspapers to comply with, especially now that newspapers are published for circulation two or three times daily. I sympathize with you. Well, let us compromise in the following way. You do not have to submit reports for censorship. But, I would like to ask all newspapers to cooperate by trying not to present news in a way which damages our national economy, to refrain from speculation or publishing news which might confuse or disrupt the projects that are well under way. Concerning the soldiers deployed at various installations, I want them to be pulled back as soon as possible, or even today. I wish that on Monday, an official day, we should see no more soldiers guarding the various sites. They should be pulled back from as many spots as possible and be kept only at major headquarters. This is the purpose for calling a meeting today. Now, you are welcome to ask me any questions.

[Unidentified speaker] For how many months [words indistinct]?

[Suchinda] We want to make it the soonest possible. According to our plan, it will take approximately six months because there is a need to amend the Constitution. And last night when we had an audience with his majesty the king, his majesty kindly gave us several useful instructions for us to carry out.

[Question indistinct]

[Suchinda] The secretary general is concerned about democracy. Well, there is no change whatsoever in our democratic system. We will uphold democracy with the king as head of state. Everything will remain the same. But there will have to be methods to solve the problems of vote buying in elections, to prevent politicians from taking advantage of their status as parliamentarians to accumulate their wealth and make money. Well, we are not experts on this. We will appoint a committee comprising knowledgeable people from all civilian sectors to help us draft a constitution. We will also invite existing political parties, party secretary generals or party representatives, those who are experts, to help us draft a constitution. I think there are many among the members of parliament themselves who do not like vote buying. They too do not want to spend a large amount of money on it. But at this point, when everybody is using money to walk into the parliament, everyone had to do the same thing out of mistrust. This resulted in our political system being corrupted to this point.

[Question indistinct]

[Suchinda] There are two options for that. First, the council may have to be in charge for six months. In that manner, it would be easy to get our work done and improve things. The second option: We may form a legitimate government right away. At present, our advisers we have named, such as Dr. Ukrit Mongkhonnawin and Michai Ruchuphan, are helping us with this problem. We are trying to have academics, professionals, and experts recognized by the people to help us.

[Unidentified speaker] At present, Gen. Chatchai Chunhawan [words indistinct]?

[Suchinda] We are treating them with respect. We have accorded them honor. Both Gen. Chatchai and Gen. Athit are our seniors in the military. Please do not worry about this. Gen. Chatchai and Gen. Athit are being well taken care of; we are treating them respectfully. We only need to keep them in custody for a period of time. Well, there has been an attempt to incite mobs against us. Anyway, this does not come from Gen. Chatchai but from a group of people who made contacts and helped incite mobs. Well, I will meet Watthana Atsawahem to discuss this as there has been a report about contact made with Watthana to bring in a group of workers from Samut Prakan for rallies and demonstrations.

[Unidentified speaker] I would like to ask about a report saying the United States did not give cooperation and will cut assistance.

[Suchinda] We have never had this kind of a report. We hope there will be no problem because, earlier, the U.S. ambassador had spoken with us about increasing assistance and lowering prices on weapons we buy from the United States and so forth. We have had no report to that effect. Nevertheless, we assert the right we have in taking this action, which is appropriate for our country. Otherwise, there would have been greater damage to our country. What concerns us the most is the parliamentary dictatorship. You see what a bogus democracy has done to the Philippines. The country had come under the rule of President Marcos for decades. You see how decadent that country has been. We were heading in that direction. Only the military institution remains to strike a balance with the political power. No other institutions can do that. All the civilian sectors, the police, the bureaucracy, all have succumbed to the influence of bad elements in politics. If we let this contiunue, those who clamor for democracy, even the press itself, will be deprived of all freedom. If parliamentary dictatorship can gain its foothold, we will be deprived of freedom. And now we are close to that. You in the press must well realize this.

[Unidentified speaker] [Words indistinct] and in addition to that, will there be any more regulations or policies concerning news publications?

[Suchinda] I have already asked you to be constructive in presenting news. That does not mean there is anything wrong that you cannot report. We give you the freedom because we respect you.

[Question indistinct]

[Suchinda] At present there are only two people we want to arrest. They are Major General Manun Rupkhachon and Police Captain Chaloem Yubamrung. Only the two of them.

[Unidenetified speaker] What are the charges against them?

[Suchinda] They are charged with attempting to create a situation detrimental to national security, peace, and order in the country at present. I believe that all of you know these two people well. All of you must know about Police Captain Chaloem Yubamrung and what kind of movements he is prone to. And concerning Khun Manun, you too should know what he has done in the past.

[Unidentified speaker] There was already a question before this asking you how long the National Peacekeeping Council would need to do its work, to which you said about six months. Now I would like to ask you to elaborate what steps will be taken from now on regarding the move to bring administration back to normal. What steps will be taken and will there be a drafting of a new constitution, or will the most appropriate version of our past constitutions be used?

[Suchinda] We will draft a new constition.

[Unidentified speaker] May I add: Will the drafting of the constitution be completed within six months, or will there be an election within six months?

[Suchinda] We will try to complete the drafting of the new constitution and the holding of the general elections within six months. Anyway, this does not depend on my own capability. It depends on the academics and professionals whom we invite to draft the constitution. They will include people like Michai Ruchuphan and many others from political parties. But I do not want to name names. There are politicians who are well respected by the general public and who have an image of being good and honest people. Well, we have those people in mind.

[Unidentified speaker] During the period when a new government is not yet formed, will there be any problems in handling foreign affairs?

[Suchinda] I do not think that there will be any problem on this because foreign affairs will be handled by the Foreign Ministry's permanent secretary who is already acting in the capacity of the foreign minister concerning routine matters. Certain issues beyond his responsibility will be forwarded to the people we have placed in charge of foreign affairs matters. We have already discussed this. For example, Prime Minister Gen. Chatchai was earlier scheduled to attend a meeting in Indonesia. This issue will be assigned to the permanent secretary for foreign affairs. Any routine work on foreign affairs will be under the responsibility of the permanent secretary who is considered to be a particularly qualified government technocrat on foreign affairs.

[Speaker from THAN SETTHAKIT] Sir, I am from the THAN SETTHAKIT newspaper. [Question indistinct]

[Suchinda] At present, everything is still being carried out in the same old format. There is no change on this matter. But we will set up an advisory committee on finance and economic work. We will hold consultations and meetings to discuss what problems we should tackle. Another objective we have already outlined is that we wish to form a private sector committee on economic matters. We are asking many people to join this committee, such as Khun Pharon Itsarasena, Dr. Amnuai Wirawan, and Khun Anan Panyarachun. We will ask them to form a committee to look into certain bureaucratic regulations which have hampered our economic progress during the period of the previous administration so that they can be immediately rectified and amended. This means that a committee will be formed to study this matter. We will try to improve for the better the effectiveness of our current economic and trade work. This is our intention.

[Unidentified speaker] With regard to some permanent government officials who were intimidated and unfairly treated by politicians to the extent that they had to resign, will you (?ask the Anticorruption Commission to look into this matter) [words indistinct]?

[Suchinda] I think that in accordance with government regulations, there are certain steps to be followed in lodging grievance petitions for justice. I do not know very much about the grievance-lodging regulations on civil servants. Anyone who feels that he has been unfairly treated can submit his grievance petition to a commission in charge of procedural consideration. We cannot interfere in such procedures in order to transfer certain people back to their former positions, because we may be accused of doing this [seizing power] just to help only a certain number of our friends. There is already a commission to take care of this. I do not think that there will be any problem if normal official regulations on this issue are followed.

[Unidentified speakder] [Words indistinct] will certain major projects (?on the construction of infrastructure facilities) be reviewed?

[Suchinda] I think we will have a committee to consider this. But we will not try to interfere in this matter. For example, if a project has been implemented smoothly and effectively, we will not review it because it might be delayed for a few more years. We will not do that. But those projects which have been rumored to be involved with corruption scandals, we will look into them to resolve problems. Or if there is evidence showing that certain projects are impractical and cannot be actually implemented but were previously approved for the vested interests of certain persons, we will have to look into them to rectify the situation. However, we will not interfere in certain projects which have already been scrutinized by responsible committees. If we do that we might end up paying more money for and delaying their implementation. If we have to follow up every project for rectification, progress may be adversely affected.

[Unidentified speaker] With regard to the policy of the previous government on reopening the forests, [words indistinct] will the (?new administration) have a similar policy?

[Suchinda] There was an extensive opposition to that policy. In my many interviews in the past, I kept saying that I was not an expert on this subject. Therefore, the party that can give a qualified answer to this question is the one that has direct responsibility on this. It is the Forestry Department that must consider this matter. But there was a tendency that the majority of the people were against the policy on opening up the forests. Incidentally, the person who proposed that policy has not yet come forward to explain to the public what its merits are. Sometimes, a certain project or idea appears to look very good on paper. But when it is put into practice, certain shortcomings crop up. That is why instead of becoming successful, that project only does serious damage to the country.

[Unidentified speaker] What legal procedures are you going to pursue (?in dealing with allegedly corrupt individuals in the previous governments?)

[Suchinda] In connection with this issue we may have to set up a committee to deal with it. We are considering whether to allow the existing Anticorruption Commission to handle this issue or to set up a special committee to work on it in particular.

[Unidentified speaker] [Words indistinct] (?will there be any change or revision of our Cambodian policy?)

[Suchinda] There will be no revision because our policy on the Cambodian issue remains a continual process. [passage indistinct] Our intention is to effectively help end the fighting in Cambodia. This is because if everything ends peacefully and the economy of our neighboring country becomes sound, our economy will also eventually be improved since bilateral trade can be developed.

[Unidentified speaker] [Words indistinct] whether the committees which will be set up are invested with power [words indistinct]?

[Suchinda] The power remains with the National Peacekeeping Council. The committees must propose anything to the National Peacekeeping Council for consideration. This means that at present everything is under the power of the National Peacekeeping Council. Therefore, everything must be executed within this frameowrk. If a proposal is good and adopted and goes into practice, it will become a legal regulation for implementation.

[Question indistinct]

[Suchinda] Yes, advisory committees.

[Unidentified speaker] Have they been appointed yet?

[Suchinda, turning to aides] Have they been appointed yet? Yes, they have already been appointed. But there might be more people to be added to them later.

[Question indistinct]

[Suchinda] I think this problem can be solved at the ministerial level.

[Unidentified speaker] With regard to the problems of farmers, especially the current low prices of rubber, will the National Peacekeeping Council have a short-term policy to resolve these problems?

[Suchinda] We must do both: solving the problems in short-term and long-term. The short-term solution of problems is normally the duty of permanent government officials concerned. Any problems which are beyond their capabilities to deal with must be forwarded to the National Peacekeeping Council for consideration and assistance. I think the working pattern must be like what I just said.

[Unidentified speaker] This means that the National Peacekeeping Council will begin henceforth to solve these problems?

[Suchinda] The reason we have taken charge means that we must solve all problems immediately, beginning now.

[Unidentified speaker] (?With regard to a project in Korat), I would like to know whether there will be any adverse effect on the plan to esatablish the Suranari University [in Chatchai's constituency, Nakhon Ratchasima Province] there since the [words indistinct]?

[Suchinda] I do not think that we will cause adverse effect on certain projects. As I said before, any existing good projects will not be abolished or suspended. We have no intention of doing that. We only intend to improve whatever projects are not effective.

[Unidentified speaker] [Words indistinct] (?stock market) [words indistinct]?

[Suchinda] I think it will carry on its normal functioning as usual. You know, many of us are also in the stock business. [laughter] This coming Monday, we might go to the stock exchange to buy more cheap stocks. [laughter]

[Question indistinct]

[Suchinda] We admit that we are not experts on this matter. But we will invite many qualified persons on this matter to a meeting today, such as [former] Deputy Minister [of Finance] Chawalit Thanachanan, the governor of the Bank of Thailand, and the Thai Military Bank general managing director, Dr. Suphachai Phanitchaphak, to discuss what measures we are going to take regarding financial and economic matters.

[Unidentified speaker] Sir, I would like to know about the progress of your attempts to take into custody Maj. Gen. Manun and Police Capt. Chaloem.

[Suchinda] We have not yet arrested them. We only have information on them. Khun Manun may still remain in Bangkok.

[Unidentified speaker] How about Police Capt. Chaloem?

[Suchinda] According to our reports, he has fled upcountry but we do not know where. If your have any information, will you please let us know? [laughter] Well, I did not know beforehand that there would be so many journalists here today.

[Unidentified speaker] These are only owners of the newspapers.

[Suchinda] Only the owners? Well, if you add some of your reporters to these numbers, I think you can easily stage a mass demonstration. [laughter] Well, because there is nothing more to say at this moment, I would like to thank all of you for your cooperation. Please bear in mind that whatever we have done, it is done with the intention of improving everything. Therefore, I ask for cooperation from all newspapers because we will try to give the press full freedom in carrying out its work. Thank you very much. [applause]

Part 2

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[Second part of news conference by General Suchinda Khraprayun, head of the National Peacekeeping Council [NPC], and Gen. Itsaraphong Nunphakdi, secretary general of the National Peacekeeping Council, to a group of Thai and foreign correspondents, at the Army Meeting Hall on 24 February—recorded]

[Text] [Itsaraphong] Following army commander's explanation of the facts to owners and editors of local newspapers, it is now my turn as assigned by the National Peacekeeping Council to answer more questions to be raised by correspondents.

You must have realized that the current situation in Thailand is extremely critical due to the erroneous administration of the state affairs and the intention to create difficulties in the country. There are many indications to substantiate this assumption as follows: First, their relatives and colleagues have been unscrupulously corrupt. Second, political appointees have been using their power to bully and persecute non-political government officials who have been subjected to all kinds of injustice such as unfair punishment in the forms of demotion. Relatives and colleagues of some political power holders have been granted privileges to seek personal gain. These things have created difficulties for non-political government officials. Third, the toppled government has created disunity so that it can survive and strive to bring about parliamentary dictatorship. Fourth, the government intended to destroy the military institution. Military ranks were conferred on unqualified individuals, while attempts were made to sow discord inside the military institution. Fifth, the most beloved institution of the entire Thai people—the monarchy—has been offended. The National Peacekeeping Council, comprising the Army, Air Force, Navy, and Police Department and the fraternal patriotic people, who are extremely loyal to the monarchy, have always practiced restraint to the point where we can no longer tolerate all these vices which are detrimental to national security.

The National Peacekeeping Council hereby reaffirms that it will expeditiously establish the democratic administrative system with the king as the head of state through the following actions. First, we will return the power to the fraternal people as soon as possible by establishing a body in charge of drafting a constitution that will be written in such a way that no one can exploit the parliament for personal gains and there will be an election mechanism to screen for good and qualified representatives of the fraternal Thai people. Moreover, political parties will be given effective tools to control their members. Second, we will tackle the problem of corruption through inspection and drastic actions against past corruption practices. This includes actions to prevent and suppress corruption. Third, we will improve the country's administrative system so as to reduce or obstruct the influence of political appointees over non-political government officials. Fourth, we will finalize as quickly as possible with honesty and justice the cases of the assassination plots against personalities and offenses against the monarchy. The National Peacekeeping Council wishes to seek cooperation from our mass media friends and appeal to you to do your duty faithfully as Thai citizens who are loyal to the monarchical institution and who are proud of your professionalism. This is what the National Peacekeeping Council has assigned me to tell correspondents.

The army commander has answered several questions from newspaper owners and editors. At this round, I will also answer questions from correspondents. You can bring up your questions. I will answer them if time permits.

[Question indistinct]

[Suchinda] We have invited two legal experts—Michai Ruchuphan and Dr. Ukrit Mongkhonawin—to give us advice in this area. It is inappropriate to reveal their suggestion at this moment. However, we have considered the procedure. We probably cannot give a clear answer if we will get our money back or not due to legal interpretation. We cannot exercise justice without relying on the law. We will probably use the power of the National Peacekeeping Council to seize this and that. But we will do it with the existing law.

[Unidentified speaker] [Words indistinct] have we prepared for holding a general election?

[Suchinda] There are two ways to do it. First, the National Peacekeeping Council remains in power until a general election is held. Second, an interim government is established to do the job. So far, we have not yet decided which method we will resort to. We will convene a meeting today or tomorrow to discuss this matter. Meanwhile, we must try to hold a general election as quick as possible, as I mentioned earlier that we want to finish everything within six months. This is what we want. However, the constitution will be drafted by academicians and experts as well as representatives from various sectors who are accepted and respected by the people for their knowledge in the election mechanism.

[Unidentified speaker] [Words indistinct] said that they disapproved the coup and that the United States had announced the suspension of economic assistance to us. What is our reaction or opinion in this regard?

[Suchinda] I am not worried about this matter. As I said earlier, we have thoroughly considered and can justify all actions taken. Naturally, what we have done will cause economic stalemate. However, we must choose between taking one step back so we can take 10 steps ahead and or plunging ourselves into a deep valley merely by standing idle. Therefore, we decided to do what we have done. This is why I request newspaper owners and editors to help us. We know that what we are doing will have some impact on the economy. But we will try to minimize the impact. At the same time, the mass media can be very helpful.

[Unidentified speaker] It is the target to give the power back to the people within six months. However, if we take longer than six months, do you think that you will be accused of applying dictatorship?

[Suchinda] We are always careful with what we do so that we will not be accused of being dictators. We are acting in good faith. Why? Because many things in our political system such as corruption and vote buying are unacceptable to the people. If we allow such things to continue, you will see that we will get from the next general election people of bad influences as the peoples' representatives. As you know, the people who earn their living through unscrupulous means but are rich still have respect for government officials as long as they are not political appointees. But once they become political appointees, government officials must respect them. This scenario will happen if no correction is made.

[Unidentified speaker] How confident are you that we will be able to tackle all these problems within six months?

[Suchinda] We are considerably confident. I cannot give you the answer but I can say that we are determined to finish the job within six months.

[Unidentified speaker] Where is the former prime minister at this moment? What action will be taken?

[Suchinda] We will not do anything to him. We treat him with respect. We have asked him to stay at a place with all conveniences provided. This should not be any problem. After we judge the situation to be normal, we will no longer detain him. You don't have to worry about this matter because the prime minister himself and I have maintained cordial relations. I call him elder brother because he used to be my senior in the military service. We have known each other for a long time. I used to go around with him 15 to 20 years ago.

[Unidentified speaker] Have we assessed the force under the command of Major General Manun that he can use to put up resistance against us?

[Suchinda] I never thought that Manun had any force.

[Unidentified speaker] Government officials are very afraid that there would be massive transfer of positions or dismissals after the power seizure. Will this happen?

[Suchinda] In principle, that should not happen. This matter is to be decided by government agencies concerned. We will not do anything unusual at this moment. Everything will proceed as normal.

[Unidentified speaker] Will the policy toward Cambodia be changed? Will your party become like Burma's State Law and Order Restoration Council? Many people have that impression, because you yourself control five or six ministries.

[Suchinda] At the initial stage, the permanent secretaries of all ministries have the administrative authority to control all routine undertakings. During the absence of a government, we must have someone to look after all agencies. We must try to minimize the number of the people who will do this duty so as to prevent confusion. For example, I control five ministries. What can I do? I only keep the top position and will act only when important decisions have to be made. This work was formerly done by ministers or the prime minister. Since permanent secretaries might not dare to make decisions in some cases, we have to assign three or four persons to control the ministries. Thailand's policy toward Cambodia has never changed. We want peace for Cambodia.

[Unidentified speaker] Have you ever thought of summoning former ministers and leaders and secretary generals of political parties for briefings on policies or for questioning?

[Suchinda] We might invite them for talks so that they will understand our policies. We will invite them to do so.

[Unidentified speaker] Why were the political parties not dissolved after this change?

[Suchinda] If we order the dissolution of political parties, the administrative system is then changed. We allow political parties to exist but suspend their political activities temporarily because we want to maintain the democratic system. If we dissolve political parties, we will not be able to finish our job quickly because new political parties have to be established. It is our policy to maintain the democratic system.

[Unidentified speaker] Referring to your request for the mass media to present factual news, can we publicize a factual report on interviews with ordinary people who express their negative opinions on the council?

[Suchinda] We will have to ask for your cooperation. It depends on how the press handles things. We will probably have to talk to any newspaper that deliberately interviews only the people who strongly oppose us and gives big headlines for such reports. [laughter]

[Unidentified speaker] How many people have been detained so far?

[Suchinda] So far, none except the members of the prime minister's entourage. Only a few people.

[Unidentified speaker] Have the 43 persons been charged or arrested?

[Suchinda] This matter is handled by the police. We will not interfere with the Police Department. The police director general has been given instruction.

[Unidentified speaker] Some people climbed the fence of Major General Manun's house yesterday.

[Suchinda] We wanted to arrest Manun because he is very much involved in the confusion in the country.

[Unidentified speaker] Our tourist industry has come to a low ebb since the outbreak of the Gulf war. What is the council's policy for the promotion of tourism industry?

[Suchinda] Fortunately, we are doing this as the tourism industry is at its low ebb. [laughter] Not much damage has been done. If I do it when the industry is booming, I will face more condemnation. The industry has really hit its low. I read from a newspaper yesterday that the Peninsula Hotel had reduced its rate down to only over 500 baht for a Thai client after midnight. What I said is just like advertising for the hotel. [laughter]

[Question indistinct]

[Suchinda] Because tourism earns foreign currency for the country, all governments in the past promoted this industry. At present, tourism industry in all countries is declining. I went to Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, and other countries and found that they are also facing the same problem which is not caused by the Middle East situation or terrorism. Certainly, we will promote the tourism industry.

[Unidentified speaker] Can you tell us about the prevention of vote buying?

[Suchinda] There are many ways to prevent vote buying. The constitution drafting committee will make the decision. We cannot tell at this moment what method will be used.

[Question indistinct]

[Suchinda] We have not made any decision at this point.

[Unidentified speaker] You said that the law will be amended to give more power to political parties to control their members. Do you mean that we will amend the Political Parties' Act?

[Suchinda] I cannot give you the details because I am not specialized in this field. The assigned working committee will take appropriate action.

[Unidentified speaker] I do not know whether you can tell us anything about yesterday's audience with his majesty the king. What did his majesty say?

[Suchinda] His majesty the king, with his boundless kindness reserved for his Thai subjects, graciously gave us some advice and suggestions and warned us not to disappoint the people. It is not appropriate for me to reveal everything. I can say that his majesty the king has boundless kindness and generosity for the people.

[Unidentified speaker] [Words indistinct], what will happen to the institution of the monarchy?

[Suchinda] The impact on the institution of the monarchy derived from a very serious offense. By their plan and intention, those people harbor ill intentions toward the institution. If the result of the investigation reveals such a fact and if the culprits are still alive and have influence in many areas, such as being advisors to the high-level personalities in the government, what will happen to the country?

[Unidentified speaker] Why was it allowed to drag on for nine years?

[Suchinda] You have to ask the Police Department this question.

[Question indistinct]

[Suchinda] We have no intention of doing anything against the advisors to the government. However, some of them have been harboring ill will against the military.

[Unidentified speaker] Why has our anticorruption law not been enforced like those in foreign countries? For example, in the United States, you are required to explain how you gained your property and provide the evidence. On the contrary, officials in our country have to find the evidence to incriminate suspects. If officials cannot find the evidence, it is assumed that the suspect has attained the property legally. For example, if a noodle peddler suddenly builds a 10-storey building in the United States, he will have to testify how he earned so much money. I myself was once questioned by the FBI about how I acquired my money. If I say I got the money from gambling, I must testify where I gambled. In our country, a government official may own a big house worth 100 million baht and register his gardener as the owner of the house. What can be done about this problem?

[Suchinda] I probably cannot answer this question because it deals with the law. There are many things we think should be handled through this and that methods which are impractical in the eyes of legal experts. The law that gives excessive power to law enforcers can also bring about more adverse consequences because it can be used to bully other people. For example, officials of the former anticorruption committee and similar agencies abused their authority for personal gain. However, everyone wants to solve this problem. We must find the way to do it. You do not have to worry about this issue because it is one of our major objectives.

[Unidentified speaker] It is not an act of bullying. For example, if our son has money, we would ask how he got the money instead of trying to find out if our son has stolen our money. I think it is fair to ask how the people got their money.

[Suchinda] I accept your suggestion for further consideration by the committee. I might invite you to give more details to the committee.

[Unidentified speaker] Will the administration of the country during the 6- month period be carried out by the council or an interim government? I think we have to choose which one we want.

[Suchinda] Judging from the voice, I know you must be a military housewife. [laughter] The voice of a military housewife is like this—clear with hidden aggressiveness. [laughter] If the country is to be run by a government, it must be an interim government that will prepare for holding a general election.

[Unidentified speaker] Is it true that a person such as Gen. Prem or Gen. Thianchai will be invited to temporarily assume the premiership?

[Suchinda] I do not know who projected such an idea. We have never discussed this issue.

[Unidentifed speaker] Will Gen. Chawalit be invited to help the council's work?

[Suchinda] Probably not, because he is the leader of his New Aspiration Party. That is one of the reasons for us not to dissolve political parties. We do not want to dissolve his newly established party. [laughter] He will scold me. [laughter]

[Question indistinct]

[Suchinda] We will be neutral in dealing with all political parties.

[Unidentified speaker] Will the prime minister of the new government to be established after the six-month period be elected or appointed?

[Suchinda] I cannot comment at this moment because it depends on how the constitution will be drafted. However, our main objective is to prevent vote buying and eliminate other vices from our political system.

[Unidentified speaker] Will there be restrictions such as prohibiting people's representatives from being ministers?

[Suchinda] I cannot answer this question. In principle, that is what we want.

[Unidentified speaker] As the constitution has been abolished, do you think that the prime minister should be elected or not? Will you accept the premiership if it is offered to you?

[Suchinda] I have repeatedly said that I have no intention to meddle in politics. I do not want to get involved in politics. I have to do it this time because if we allow things to continue unchecked, the country will be in a shambles beyond salvation. What we are most worried about is the parliamentary dictatorship. Sometimes, democracy is merely used as a pretext. For example, the Philippines for decades under Marcos was said to be ruled by the parliamentary system. What was the result? Thailand was moving in that direction.

[Unidentified speaker] What is your economic policy? Does our country still want to be an newly industrialized country? Will there be any change?

[Suchinda] We will continue what we deem good. This is not my duty. It is the economic advisory team who will carry on this undertaking.

[Unidentified speaker] Do you think the stock market will be affected by this incident?

[Suchinda] I have already answered this question. I believe there will be some impact. As I said earlier, I and my colleagues also have invested in the stock market. We plan to buy the falling shares on Monday.

[Unidentified speaker] The second paragraph of the first communique issued by the party says: The prime minister as the head of government has not seriously attempted to solve the problem. Moreover, the prime minister has even committed such inappropriate acts himself by claiming various reasons to conceal corruption. Does it mean that the former prime minister will be sued by the anticorruption committee or tried in court?

[Suchinda] This matter depends on the decision to be made by the committee and evidence available. I probably cannot tell you who must stand trial. There might not be any evidence to substantiate the accusation.

[Unidentified speaker] Has the charge been made?

[Suchinda] The newspaper made the charge. [laughter]

[Unidentified speaker] Will M.R. Khukrit be invited to give advice?

[Suchinda] Probably not, because he has already washed his hands of politics. We respect him as a scholar, philosopher, and artist. He is like a superman. Everyone admits this fact. Despite his age, he is still mentally healthy. We are willing to take his advice from his newspaper column.

[Singapore correspondent, in English] I am a Singaporean reporter. I have to ask my question in English. Have you studied the election law in Singapore? [words indistinct]

[Suchinda, in English] I have never studied election law in Singapore. All Thai people are afraid of Lee Kwan Yew. [laughter]

[Unidentified speaker] What action will be taken against Maj. Gen. Manun if he is arrested?

[Suchinda] Legal actions will be taken. The police will raise charges against him.

[Question indistinct]

[Suchinda] He will have to be tried in the country. In the past, he was allowed to travel out of the country on two occasions for the sake of national security. As a matter of fact, every accused must be tried and punished in the country according to the law.

[Unidentified speaker] If Maj. Gen. Manun has already fled to a foreign country, will the country where he is taking refuge be contacted for his extradiction?

[Suchinda] This involves legal actions. His offense this time is different from those in the past because the authorities have ruled that Manun is guilty. In the previous cases, Maj. Gen. Manun committed the offenses in the public places such as sending his men to seize places. Such offenses warrant his extradition. I do not know how the police will work this out. I do not know this time if his offenses are clear enough to seek his extradition. However, if the police have the evidence to justify such a request, we will take actions.

[Unidentified speaker] [Words indistinct] It was said that prior to the takeover, some senior military officers went to consult with Khukrit Pramot and got the green light from him. Is this true?

[Suchinda] That is untrue. Khukrit has no force under his control at all. Why should we act only after receiving the green light from him.

[Unidentified speaker] What is the council's attitude toward the Gulf war?

[Suchinda] Our attitude is similar to that of other foreign governments, that is we want the war to end.

[Unidentified speaker] Can you tell us about national forestry policy? What measures should be taken in dealing with illegal logging and forest destruction?

[Suchinda] The Army has greatly contributed to the preservation of forests and prevention and suppression of illegal logging and reforestation. As I told reporters on several occasions, I cannot comment on the reforestation policy because I have no knowledge in this field. The Forestry Department has all the facts. Policies might look good but turn out to be impractical and vice versa. Therefore, I should not say this policy or that policy is good or bad. The people who work or are specialized in this field should have the answer. The watch indicates that the time is up. This should be enough for today. Let us go see boxing on television.

[Unidentified speaker] Let me ask the last question.

[Suchinda] OK, the last question.

[Unidentified speaker] Because you are now responsible for foreign affairs, will you continue Gen. Chatchai's efforts in connection with the Cambodian problem? Will you take the initiative without depending on ASEAN?

[Suchinda] We will let the Foreign Ministry handle this issue. However, our policy toward Cambodia is that we want peace as quickly as possible for the maximum benefit of Thailand. In fact, the Army has been involved with the Cambodian problem from the beginning. For this reason, we know as much about the problem as officials from other agencies.

[Unidentified speaker] Just one more. Peace in Cambodia has two versions: peace with Khmer Rouge and peace without the Khmer Rouge. Which one will you choose?

[Suchinda] Which one will be successful?

[Unidentified speaker] I do not know. We assume that you know.

[Suchinda] The method recommended might fail. If we want to be successful, we must compromise.

[Unidentified speaker] Do you mean that every faction must participate?

[Suchinda] All factions must compromise. They cannot reach any agreement because these factions do not compromise.

[Unidentified speaker] Do you mean that the Khmer Rouge should participate in [words indistinct]

[Suchinda] Yes, that should be the way. If you do not yield to this, how can the Khmer Rouge agree with that because it has a lot of forces in that country. They have been fighting for a long time.

[Unidentified speaker] [Words indistinct] proposed by General Chatchai?

[Suchinda] The Foreign Ministry will consider what actions should be taken.

[Question] The former government planned to open trade offices in Hanoi and Phnom Penh. Will this plan be suspended or continued?

[Suchinda] This plan will probably continue because it is our policy to promote friendly relations with neighboring countries. We want good relations with all countries.

[Question indistinct]

[Suchinda] I do not believe that it is true. Second, this is not reason for our action. Let me tell you the truth. Some people said that I would be dismissed. But General Chatchai sent his men to ask me to concurrently serve as the supreme commander and army commander.

[Unidentified speaker] Was that the attempt by General Chatchai to dismiss General Sunthon? [laughter]

[Suchinda] I was asked to accept the two posts of the supreme commander and army commander.

[Unidentified speaker] It was rumoured that the appointment of General Athit as deputy defense minister was the cause for this takeover?

[Suchinda] That is not true. We cannot let such a small matter affect the country. I told reporters that since he is the deputy prime minister in charge of national security, to appoint him as a deputy minister is an act of looking down upon him. It is a demotion for him. Have you ever seen a deputy minister also concurrently serving as deputy prime minister? The position of deputy prime minister is higher than that of a minister. He was already in charge of the Defense Ministry.

[Unidentified speaker] Is he still being detained?

[Suchinda] Please do not call it detention. We merely have him in a place which is more comfortable or safer than his home. We will be blamed for anything that might happen to him.

[Unidentified speaker] What is your reason for not accepting the two posts?

[Suchinda] The reason I did not accept the offer for the two posts is that I do not want to betray my superior.

[Unidentified speaker] Is this your principle?

[Suchinda] Nothing. I have said before that some people want to destroy solidarity and unity of the military institution through various ways and means.

[Unidentified speaker] When you were first appointed as the army commander, you said that soldiers must be patient. Does your decision to seize the power mean that you have lost your patience.

[Suchinda] We must be patient. We soldiers must sacrifice everything. First of all, I never thought before of doing this. However, if I did not do it, the country would suffer. I could no longer remain patient. So, we did it after consultations with all sectors.

[Unidentified speaker] How long did it take to start the seizure of power?

[Suchinda] One hour.

[Unidentified speaker] When did the prime minister make the offer for the two posts?

[Suchinda] Seven or eight days ago.

[Unidentified speaker] Was [words indistinct] informed about this?

[Suchinda] I informed him.

[Unidentified speaker] What did him say?

[Suchinda] He said that he will have to leave after September. [laughter] Why bother him.

[Unidentified speaker] Do you mean that after September you might accept the two posts?

[Suchinda] Nobody wants to work too hard. I myself like to work in accordance with my ability. If we have less work to do, we can adjust ourselves to it. We might not be able to work effectively if the work is too much for us. However, it depends on many things such as necessity, circumstances, and what is left for us to do.

[Unidentified speaker] Does the word circumstances imply that you might consider the offer after September?

[Suchinda] Circumstances has many meanings. Wife, weather, and air pollution are also circumstances. Everything around us including our friends are circumstances. The request made by my deputy for me to leave so that he can take over the post is also circumstances. [laughter] That is enough. Let's go see boxing.

[Unidentified speaker] Will Maj. Gen. Manum be dismissed from his post prior to any legal action can be taken against him?

[Suchinda] We have not yet thought of taking any action in this regard. However, there is a limit to how long he may remain absent from work. He might have submitted a leave request.

[Unidentified speaker] If he is absent from work, he might...

[Suchinda, interrupting] If he is absent from work, we must take actions according to the laws and regulations.

[Unidentified correspondent] I am an economic news reporter. Can we report the decline in foreign investment and the fall of stock market?

[Suchinda] This is the fact. We can report that. There should not be any problem.

[Unidentified speaker] Has the military set up a team to hunt for Manun?

[Suchinda] No such thing. [laughter]

[Unidentified speaker] How will Captain Chaloem will be treated?

[Suchinda] The police will handle this case. He simply fled. He might not be guilty.

[Unidentified speaker] Maj. Gen. Manun might be found guilty of absence from work and refusal to report himself to authorities. What is the next action to be taken against him?

[Suchinda] The action will be taken according to the regulations.

[Unidentified speaker] Can you explain that?

[Suchinda] If you are absent from government service for a number of days, you will be dimissed from your post.

[Unidentified speaker] Yesterday, a leaflet reportedly issued by Ramkhamhaeng University students was distributed calling for a protest rally against this coup. Do you have any plan to call students for a meeting to hear your explanation?

[Suchinda] That is what we will probably do. However, any violation of the announcements and orders will have to be dealt with drastic measures. Otherwise, we will not be able to maintain internal peace and order. We believe that everyone understands the reasons. We would like to ask the mass media to help us because any untoward event can do more harm to our economy. It is our objective that we will set up a government and hold a general election as quick as possible. Everyone should follow up our work. Any unrest will do more harm to the economy.

[Unidentified speaker] This is the last question. Has there been any report on resistance during the past 24 hours following the takeover? How long will soldiers continue to guard places?

[Suchinda] Forces which are not needed will be pulled out. We want to see no sign of abnormality or movement of forces on Monday. However, it might be necessary to keep some forces at important places. Most of our forces will return to their units before tomorrow morning. Thank you. The conference is ended. [applause]

Suchinda Vows Next Premier To Be Civilian

BK2502082391 Bangkok Domestic Service in Thai 0530 GMT 25 Feb 91

[Statement by General Suchinda Khraprayun, deputy head of the National Peacekeeping Council to labor leaders at Supreme Command Headquarters on 25 February—recorded]

[Text] I assure you here that the prime minister [in the provisional government] will be a civilian and most members of the cabinet will also be civilians. We will try to invite capable individuals who are honest and popular with the general public to take up cabinet posts.

Our council has great determination because it has humbly received recommendations from the king, who said we must not disappoint the people. This is what we have always kept in our hearts. Therefore, even though the appointed government is a provisional one, it must be made up of individuals who are popular with the people and whom the people will be glad to hear named to the cabinet. It is perhaps not possible to please 100 percent of the people, but I think at least 80 percent of them will be pleased. These are the assurances I wish to give on this occasion.

Now for the next issue, certain people whose interests have been negatively affected by the power takeover have tried to mobilize mobs as the National Peacekeeping Council tries to administer the country in place of the government. I do not believe that union leaders and workers will become their tools, because all labor leaders are just as patriotic as us and they had struggled hard for justice. I had read with pleasure your fight against corruption in your circle and other sectors, which shows that your goals are similar to ours. Therefore, I ask you labor leaders to cooperate with us to guide the country in the direction that will make the people at large happy.

Armed Forces Figures Control Major Ministries

BK2402024891 Hong Kong AFP in English 0237 GMT 24 Feb 91

[Text] Bangkok, Feb 24 (AFP)—Leading Thai newspapers Sunday called on the military leadership that seized power in a coup to take immediate steps for a return to civilian rule.

Describing Saturday's coup that toppled Prime Minister Chatchai Chunhawan's government as "a serious blemish on our contemporary political history," THE NATION said the military "must now demonstrate beyond doubt that it doesn't want to cling on to power."

"A definite time-frame for a national election to return power to the people must be announced without delay," the English-language daily added.

The BANGKOK POST, another English-language paper, also called on the junta led by Supreme Commander Sunthon Khongsomphong to "give priority to working out a programme of action that would return the country to a political and economic normalcy as soon as possible."

Hours after soldiers seized control of government offices and arrested Mr. Chatchai, 71, who in August 1988 became Thailand's first elected premier in 12 years, 59-year-old General Sunthon flew to the northern city of Chiang Mai for a meeting with the country's constitutional monarch.

There were no details early Sunday on the general's audience with King Phumiphon Adunyadet, who has consistently played an active role in attempts to set the fast-expanding Southeast Asian country of 55 million on the path of democracy.

A military announcement published in Sunday's newspapers outlined tasks for the military lineup which took over in the bloodless coup under the formal name of the National Peace-Keeping Council.

Under the overall command of Gen. Sunthon, it allocates responsibilities to the country's armed forces leaders, with the lion's share apparently going to the army chief, General Suchinda Khraprayun.

Gen. Suchinda, 57, whose position is traditionally the strongest one in the armed forces, is taking charge of the Ministries of Defense, the Interior, Communications, Foreign Affairs and Justice.

Finance, Commerce, Industry and Agriculture are under Navy Commander Admiral Praphat Kritsanachan, while the Air Force chief, Kaset Rotchananin, takes over education, public health, science and technology and university affairs.

Meanwhile press reports identified Queen Sirikit as the member of the royal family targeted almost a decade ago in a failed assassination plot and one of the central factors leading up to the coup.

The military revolt, which was the outcome of long strained relations between the armed forces chiefs and Mr. Chatchai, was precipitated by a dispute over the slow-moving investigation into the 1982 plot.

Both Mr. Chatchai and the military leadership were trying to use the assassination plot, which also targeted Mr. Chatchai's predecessor Prem Tinsulanon and a senior member of his government, Athit Kamlang-ek, to serve their own political aspirations.

Mr. Athit, a former supreme commander and army chief who was thoroughly disliked by the junta leaders, is believed to have been arrested with Mr. Chatchai.

A deputy prime minister, his appointment a few days ago by Mr. Chatchai as vice defense minister also angered military leaders.

Government To Be Announced 'Within 7 Days'

BK2502162091 Bangkok Domestic Service in Thai 1200 GMT 25 Feb 91

[Text] The National Peacekeeping Council has decided to establish a provisional government to administer the country. The list of the provisional government is expected to be announced within seven days. Army Assistant Secretary Colonel Banchon Chawansin said:

[Begin Chawansin recording] The National Peacekeeping Council has decided to establish a provisional government. It is now selecting the persons and the list is expected to be announced within seven days. It has set up a committee to draft a provisional constitution for use during the drafting of a permanent constitution. The committee is working hard in this regard. These two points reflect that the National Peacekeeping Council does not intend to hold on to power for a long time. [end recording]

Further on Provisional Government

BK2502142891 Bangkok Voice of Free Asia in Thai 1030 GMT 25 Feb 91

[Text] Sakthip Krairoek, director general of the Information Department, held a news briefing for newsmen at the Foreign Ministry today to report to them that a group of senior officials from the Foreign Ministry, led by Permanent Secretary M.R. Kasemsamoson Kasemsi, attended a meeting called by the National Peacekeeping Council at the Army Meeting Hall on 25 February at 1000.

With regards to the Foreign Ministry, the National Peacekeeping Council wanted the ministry's permanent secretary to report to the foreign diplomatic corps in Thailand about the reasons and necessity for the takeover of administrative power.

In response to the instruction, the Foreign Ministry's permanent secretary has invited the foreign diplomatic corps for a meeting at the ministry. And on the morning of 25 February, the Burmese ambassador, in his capacity as dean of the diplomatic corps in Thailand, and the ambassadors from the ASEAN countries called on the permanent secretary at the ministry.

The permanent secretary told the group that a provisional government will be formed to be in charge of national administration within one week, and the drafting of the constitution will be completed within six months. The Foreign Ministry's permanent secretary reiterated the National Peacekeeping Council communique pledging to uphold obligations under the United Nations Charter and international organizations, as well as treaties and other commitments Thailand has concluded with other countries. Concerning the Cambodian problem, the National Peacekeeping Council will pursue the policy adopted by the Foreign Ministry. In fact, the policy on Cambodia has been discussed consistently with the military. Thailand will adhere to the peace plan adopted by the five permanent members of the UN Security Council in pursuit of peace in Cambodia. The Burmese and ASEAN ambassadors expressed full understanding of the explanation.

The permanent secretary of the Foreign Ministry will invite ambassadors from other countries, such as those from the EC countries, the United States, China, the Soviet Union, and Japan for a meeting scheduled for this afternoon.

Chatchai's Foreign Policy Initiatives 'Frozen'

BK2502022191 Bangkok THE NATION in English 25 Feb 91 p A1

[Text] Foreign Ministry Permanent Secretary Mr Kasemsamoson Kasemsi said yesterday that policy initiatives of the previous government on relation with neighbouring country would have to be frozen "for a moment" to allow for adjustment to present conditions.

Kasemsamoson said he met briefly yesterday with Gen Suchinda Khraprayun, a key member of the National Peacekeeping Command [as published] that took power on Saturday, to tell the army chief that Thailand's attendance at next month's conference in Bali on ASEAN affairs would have to be scrapped.

Ousted prime minister Chatchai Chunhawan was to have joined the regional seminar on March 3-5 along with all other ASEAN leaders. The Bali seminar is expected to follow with an informal summit to discuss ASEAN cooperation on security and economic issues.

Plans for a summit with Vietnamese Prime Minister Do Muoi in the first half of this year will also have to be scrapped, Kasemsamon said.

Kasemsamoson said he would not go to Bali to represent Thailand because the invitation was only for heads of government.

The Foreign Ministry will invite all the foreign ambassadors now posted to Thailand to a briefing on the domestic situation following the military seizure of power, an informed source and yesterday.

Fourth Army Put on Alert in Southern Province

BK2502024391 Bangkok BANGKOK POST in English 25 Feb 91 p 6

[Text] Nakhon Si Thammarat—The Fourth Army placed its units on alert yesterday with members required to be on duty at weekends.

Orders have also been issued to monitor possible movements that may lead to protests against Saturday's military takeover by the National Peacekeeping Council, military sources said.

But there was no evidence of possible protests in the province yesterday with residents and government officials tending to favour the coup, according to interviews by a POST staff member in the province.

Some residents said conditions had deteriorated under the previous government, especially over corruption.

Sources Say Council To Set Up 3 Committees

BK2502043991 Bangkok BANGKOK POST in English 25 Feb 91 p 3

[Text] The National Peacekeeping Council [NPC] is expected to set up three special committees to draw up a new constitution, investigate corrupt ministers and the alleged assassination attempt.

NPC sources said the committee responsible for drawing up the new constitution will comprise largely academics.

The new constitution will incorporate provisions emphasising the prevention of vote-buying and punishing those who violate them.

The NPC has dissolved the government and parliament and nullified the Constitution after taking power from the Chatchai Chunhawan administration on Saturday.

It also promised to complete the new constitution and call a general election in six months.

A committee will be responsible for investigating cabinet ministers in the toppled administration suspected of being involved in corruption in major development projects.

The sources did not give details on who of the previous 44-member cabinet will be targetted.

Key cabinet ministers in the previous administration have maintained a low profile since the coup.

The NPC has cited widespread corruption among the Chatchai Cabinet as one of the major reasons.

The committee will enable the NPC to achieve its goal of dealing with the corruption problem, the sources said.

The third committee, composed totally of judges, will be responsible for investigating the alleged assassination case of 1982.

The NPC has named former "Young Turk" Army officer, Major General Manun Rupkachon, as playing a key role behind an alleged assassination plot against Her Majesty the Queen.

It is unclear if the committee will take over the investigation from the police and conduct a parallel investigation in addition to the probe now being carried out by policemen.

Council Advisory Committee Chairman Interviewed

BK2502035391 Bangkok THE NATION in English 25 Feb 91 p 2

[By Watchara Charunsantikun and Duangkamon Chotana]

[Excerpts] The chairman of the advisory committee to the ruling National Peacekeeping Command [as published] (NPC) said yesterday that Thailand's good political image could be restored and economic progress allowed to continue if stability is quickly achieved.

Bunchana Attakon said that if the military junta could bring normalcy back to the country rapidly it would gain recognition equal to that of an elected government in the eyes of the people and foreigners.

Bunchana is a respected former economic minister, who served from 1969-71. He is currently chairman of TS Life Co, an insurance company.

Speaking to THE NATION in a telephone interview, Bunchana said he was ready to take up the order appointing him to head the committee and would be reporting to the military junta this morning.

"I'm 81 and have extensive experience in politics, economic work and diplomacy," said Bunchana, an informal adviser to the New Aspiration Party of Gen Chawalit Yongchaiyut.

"I look at the list of military, political, foreign affairs and economics and fiscal, socio-psychology and technology advisory teams and find them to be capable people who have good experience," he commented.

Siam Cement Co President Pharon Itsarasena, who was appointed a member of the economic and fiscal advisory team, expressed willingness is a separate inteview yesterday to play a role, noting that he had served as an adviser to many agencies since the time of former premier Prem Tinsulanon.

Pharon said he had not been approached to take up the task and had learned about it through television. He stressed that he does not work for any political party.

The former president of the Federation of Thai Industries said the coup would have some impact on the economy but added that it should be minimal since the coup was conducted peacefully.

After listening to NPC deputy Gen Suchinda Khraprayun's statements on television, both Bunchana and Pharon said they felt the junta was sincere about solving the problems of the country.

Bunchana said Suchinda's pledge to adopt a "middle course" policy would help the country to make progress if everything could be settled within six months.

Pharon said a direct impact would be felt by the tourism industry but not in industry since foreign investors take a long-term view.

Pharon's colleagues on the economic and fiscal advisory team announced by the junta were Amaret Sila-on, former commerce minister, Wiraphong Ramangkun, former finance minister, and Chawalit Thanachan, former deputy finance minister. All three were appointees under the Chatchai administration. [passage omitted]

Chawalit, also former governor of the Bank of Thailand, met Suchinda yesterday morning to accept the appointment. The atmosphere at the meeting was cordial, Chawalit said.

He said regular press conferences by the junta to try and restore confidence among the public and foreigners were the right thing to do. Chawalit asserted that an interim government would have to be formed to run the country instead of leaving the task to permanent secretaries.

Chawalit insisted that the October meeting of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund would go ahead as scheduled even under a new government to be formed in six months' time. Phanat Simasathian, permanent secretary for finance, will continue as chairman of the coordinating committee.

THE NATION Cites Events Leading Up to Coup

BK2402024591 Bangkok THE NATION in English 24 Feb 91 p A4

[Report attributed to the "Political Desk"]

[Text] When army chief Gen Suchinda Khraprayun, the most powerful figure in the National Peacekeeping Command [as published] [NPC], was commenting last Wednesday on Gen Athit Kamlang-ek's appointment as deputy defence minister, he cracked a joke which may explain why the seizure of power yesterday was pulled off hastily.

"Stars are being rubbed off the shoulders," said Suchinda, when he was mobbed by reporters.

Chatchai appointed Athit on Tuesday apparently to counter outspoken Supreme Commander Gen Sunthon Khongsomphong, who had sternly warned against "any attempts to distort" the evidence gathered in the previous investigation into the 1982 alleged assassination attempts against three public figures. With Athit, already a deputy premier, at the Defence Ministry Chatchai would be free from attacks over the case and, given the fact that Athit was among the targets of the 1982 alleged attempts, his claim that there was no third target would carry a lot of weight.

Right or wrong, the appointment was also seen in another light by the military. Army sources said that Athit's appointment was a step towards Chatchai's decisive move to resolve his long-standing conflict with the military—sacking those he saw as disloyal military leaders.

Suchinda's joke on Wednesday reflected that assessment.

In fact sources close to the NPC told THE NATION that the last straw came when the military learned on Friday night that the premier planned to submit his orders to sack Sunthon and Suchinda during an audience which His Majesty the King was scheduled to grant him and Athit for the oath-taking ceremony yesterday evening.

Chatchai reportedly took the orders with him when he boarded a C-130 plane with his delegation at Don Muang Military Airport for a flight to Chiang Mai where Their Majesties the King and the Queen were staying. The flight never took off.

Tension was running high in the early hours before Chatchai left his Ratchakhru residence for the military airport yesterday morning. Crime Suppression Division commando units were setting up check-points around the premier's house at about 2 am amid rumours that there would be an attempt to abduct the premier as part of a coup plot.

But military sources said that the power seizure was rushed in the morning when the top brass decided to send troops to seize all TV stations, the Public Relations Department, Government House and other important government offices before noon.

The sources said the military leaders decided to preempt Chatchai's plan to sack them becuase if they moved after the premier had seen His Majesty the King they would be seen as dishonouring him. His Majesty the King is required to sign the orders presented by the premier.

Moreover, the public would also feel that the power seizure was a move to save the top military leaders' present positions. But an aide to Chatchai denied that the premier planned to sack the two top military leaders.

The power seizure also came as the conflict between the military and the government escalated over the handling of the alleged assassination attempt case.

The case came into the limelight as a result of Premier Chatchai's move to replace Pol Gen Sawaeng Thirasawat as national police [Pol] chief and promote Pol Lt Gen Bunchu Wangkanon out of the Central Investigation Bureau, which supervises the drawn-out legal case. The military linked the move to Sawaeng's approval of Bunchu's proposal to set up a committee to pursue the case and to issue warrants for the arrest of 43 suspects, including Chatchai's aide Maj Gen Manun Rupkhachon.

Bunchu, a Chullachomklao Military Academy Class Five graduate like Suchinda, was the first chief investigating officer to handle the case. And he shared his Class Five army officers' conviction that there was the "third target" in the spate of the assassination attempts and that Manun was allegedly the mastermind.

Following the sudden reshuffle at the Police Department, Crime Suppression Division Commander Pol Maj Gen Seri Temiyawet, said to be at odds with Bunchu and on speaking terms with the premier's policy advisers and Maj Gen Manun, was appointed chief investigating officer of the case.

The military saw it as a move towards "distorting the evidence" to weaken the "third-target" case and save Manun. Chatchai, the military believes, was worried about an accusation made in anonymous leaflets that his son, Kraisak Chunhawan, was also implicated, and thus instructed the Police Department to conclude the case as soon as possible.

Muanchon party leader Pol Capt Chaloem Yubamrung's planned three events that were seen by the military leaders as attempts to distort the case.

They were his call for a House committee hearing on the case, for a live telecast of the event, and for a group of five former communist insurgents, said to be participants in the alleged assassination attempts to be at a press conference scheduled to have been held yesterday. The military also believed that Chatchai was behind Chaloem' move. The police captain, when he was in the Chatchai I Cabinet, served the then premier so aggressively that the military called for his removal from the Cabinet.

Chaloem's move further deepened the conflict.

Some believe that the real cause of the premier's conflict with the military leaders was Chatchai's close relationship with Manun, who engineered two abortive coup attempts crushed by Class Five.

BANGKOK POST Cites Chief Reasons Behind Coup

BK2402030991 Bangkok BANGKOK POST in English 24 Feb 91 p 5

[By "POST reporters"]

[Text] Aside from the other reasons cited by the National Peacekeeping Council [NPC], what was perceived to be rampant corruption among the politicians and an alleged attempt by the Chatchai administration to "destroy" the armed-forces institution appears to be the two main factors prompting the military takeover yesterday.

These two areas of concern were raised during a recent informal session between Army Commander-in-Chief Gen Suchinda Khraprayun, who was yesterday named deputy leader of the NPC, and a group of senior journalists.

Gen Suchinda was critical of the conduct of senior politicians in positions of power. He blamed them for involvement in extensive irregularities particularly in the granting of major infrastructural projects.

The resentment among the military leadership against what was seen as a serious deterioration in the level of corruption in government circles was not new. The issue made newspaper headlines when former army commander Gen Chawalit Yongchaiyut publicly commented on it last year.

In fact the military leadership was not the only group that was concerned over what was generally perceived to be proliferating corruption since the Chatchai administration took office more than two years ago.

The same issue had become a common focus of concern among other professional groups in this country such as academics, businessmen and members of the print media. The concern was raised in numerous academic seminars and reflected in a great number of newspaper editorials, including those that appeared in this newspaper.

So on this particular issue, the armed-forces leadership seems to have struck a harmonious chord whenever they raised it in public. In an interview with a local newspaper early this year, Gen Suchinda openly warned that the future of the Thai political system was in the hands of the politicians—a statement which was seen to imply that (corrupt) politicians would have themselves to blame if they caused the downfall of the parliamentary system.

The army commander had also floated the proposal that the constitution, abolished by the NPC yesterday, should be amended to upgrade the status of Senators by requiring them to go through an election process, making them eligible for appointment to Cabinet portfolios.

The proposal was seen to be aimed at counter-balancing the power and influence of the elected members of the Lower House.

Gen Suchinda was supportive of the idea for such a constitutional change partly because it resembled one aspect of the American system, where both the senators and represenatives are elected.

But he also cautioned that an appropriate system had to be adopted on the minimum requirements and qualifications of those eligible to run for Senatorship so that "people of quality" would be elected to the Senate and eventually named to the Cabinet.

Prior to yesterday's military takeover, the concept of constitutional changes to upgrade the status of Senators had been broached privately in some academic circles but there was no extensive public debate.

Some academics had voiced support for the idea on grounds that it would be a logical evolution of the parliamentary system.

Under one approach that was discussed, candidates for election to the Senate could be drawn from the representatives of various professional groups who already had a proven track record in their respective careers.

Whether this idea will be picked up and adopted by the NPC in a new charter remains to be seen.

The military leadership's perception of rampant corruption in the previous administration was closely linked with what was seen to be the latter's attempt to exert control over the armed-forces establishment.

There was a common notion among the military rank and file that the previous administration had exerted control over the various important institutions—notably the political parties, the civil bureaucracy and the Police Department.

There was alarm that the previous government was aiming to spread its influence and control over the military establishment.

"The armed forces were the last institution that was left intact. If this last institution were to fall under their (the previous government's) control, there would be nothing left in the country," commented a senior officer recently.

These constituted the main thrust of the rationale behind the thinking of senior military men. It was this rationale that prompted the military takeover yesterday.

Gen Suchinda Meets Bankers; Support Promised

BK2502151391 Bangkok Domestic Service in Thai 1200 GMT 25 Feb 91

[Text] General Suchinda Khaprayun, army commander and deputy head of the National Peacekeeping Council, met a group of 50 bankers and managing directors of all commercial banks at the army auditorium this afternoon to brief them on the monetary and banking policy. After the meeting, the deputy head of the NPC granted an interview to newsmen. He said the country's economy was not affected by the takeover of power by the NPC because the Thai economy is a free system and everything continues as normal. Regarding a report on the drop in stock prices, he expressed the hope that stock prices will tomorrow adjust upward as normal.

Regarding a news report that someone [M.R. Khukrit Pramot, according to second referent item] suggested the army commander become the prime minister, General Suchinda said he would not take up the post because he is not a politician.

On the occasion, Bangkok Bank President Chatri Sophonphanit said the takeover of power by the National Peacekeeping Council has no impact on the banks. Bangkok Bank's operation is normal. Concerning a news report that the National Peacekeeping Council will order verification of assets of certain persons, Chatri said his bank is ready to follow and provide assistance in line with the announcement. His bank has prepared necessary data.

Thai Military Bank Managing Director Suphachai Phanitchaphat said the takeover of power by the National Peacekeeping Council would have no impact on the country's economy. The country's economy is able to make changes and return to normal quickly. However, he hoped the National Peacekeeping Council would make clear policies so that investors, businessmen, and foreigners will be able to confidently carry out their business and diversify more business to rural areas.

Senior Police Officers Reassigned After Coup

BK2502023391 Bangkok THE NATION in English 25 Feb 91 p A1

[Text] Two senior police officers responsible for the investigation into the nine-year-old alleged assassination attempt case were transferred to less active posts yesterday following the military coup d'etat on Saturday.

Famous crime-buster Seri Temiyavet, who took control of the investigation into the 1982 case recently, was removed from the powerful post of Crime Suppression Division chief and seconded to the Provincial Police Bureau 2. The bureau is in charge of northeastern provinces.

Seri and Police Lieutenent General Sanong Watthanawarangkun, a deputy policy chief until yesterday, were the first two bureacrats removed by the ruling junta.

The transfer order was signed yesterday by Police Director General Pol Gen Sawat Amonwiwat, who is a member of the ruling junta, a well-informed police source said.

Seri said on Friday that the alleged assassination plot had not targetted "the highest institution".

But the military junta which topped the Chatchai administration claimed a Royal Family member was a target of the alleged plot. The National Peacekeeping Command [as published] (NPC), as the junta called itself, cited the alleged assassination attempt against the "highest institution" as one of the reasons for the military takeover.

The NPC yesterday transferred Sanong, who has overseen investigation into the alleged 1982 assassination plot, to an inactive post at the Prime Minister's Office.

The command's Announcement No 21 which ordered the transfer said the virtual demotion was aimed at making "the Police Department's work more orderly and suitable".

Ex-Prime Minister Khukrit Says Coup Justified

BK2402015791 Bangkok THE NATION in English 24 Feb 91 p A3

[Text] Former Social Action Party leader M.R. Khukrit Pramot said yesterday the military had "legitimate" reasons to seize power from the government of Gen Chatchai Chunhawan.

Khukrit said he agreed with what the National Peacekeeping Command [as published] claimed as justifications for their takeover of power. "They were good enough reasons. I learned from newspapers lately that politicians had interfered too much with government bureacrats and that there were so many bad things about the government," he told reporters in an interview at his Soi Suanplu home.

The military junta that seized power charged yesterday that the Chatchai government was corrupt and that it interfered with the bureaucracy.

It also charged that the Chatchai administration had tried to protect "culprits" in the alleged 1982 assassination attempts, whose targets included a Royal Family member.

Khukrit had, in the past two weeks, also joined in criticizing the government over the alleged plot. He also described the power seizure as being well-planned. "It was swift and executed without any hitch," he said.

Apparently referring to Chatchai, Khukrit said it would be difficult for the ousted top government leaders to return to power.

Khukrit said the public's faith in Chatchai has eroded as he has never done anything to rebut accusations against him.

"He should have done something to regain his popularity but didn't," said Khukrit.

Asked whether the new government leader should be a military officer or a civilian, Khukrit said: "It can be anyone. But that person must work hard and must be qualified to run the country's administration."

Khukrit said it was normal for a country to experience changes, especially political. However, he said he could not tell whether the coup would affect the country's economic situation.

Further on Khukrit Reaction

BK2502042991 Bangkok THE NATION in English 25 Feb 91 p A2

[Text] Former prime minister M.R. Khukrit Pramot said yesterday Army Commander in Chief Gen Suchinda Khraprayun should appoint himself prime minister.

Khukrit also claimed that the country was not ready for a quick general election despite Suchinda's pledge that the National Peacekeeping Command [as published] would try to organize an election within six months.

Khukrit, who was once nicknamed "pillar of Thai democracy", said he did not consider an election very important, he said.

"I don't know why you are so worried about having an election," he said.

The ex-leader of the Social Action Party on Saturday said the military coup was justified because the previous government was plagued with corruption.

Khukrit said he was very impressed by the way Suchinda handled journalists during the press conference at the Army Auditorium yesterday morning and believed he was qualified to be prime minister.

"Judging from the way he answered the press questions, I think he is qualified to be prime minister," Khukrit said.

When asked whether having Suchinda as prime minister would give the military too much political control, Khukrit said: "I see nothing wrong with having the military run the country."

It was not clear whether Khukrit was serious about his remarks or he was trying to be sarcastic about the military role.

Asked during the press conference about the possibility that he might take over the premiership himself, Suchinda said: "I have repeatedly told you that I don't want to enter politics. Besides I don't want to give myself more workload."

Khukrit, who was very critical of the toppled Chatchai government, said the country was not ready for an election in six months.

He also shrugged off the US decision to suspend economic and military aid to Thailand to protest the coup. "If we want to stage a coup, why should we care about what others think? he said.

'Well-Known' Figures Express Support for Coup

BK2402021391 Bangkok THE NATION in English 24 Feb 91 p A2

[Text] Well-known figures expressed support for the coup yesterday saying that the political crisis facing the Chatchai administration had made the situation ripe for a military takeover.

Squadron Leader Prasong Sunsiri, former secretary-general of the National Security Council, said that the country had been severely damaged by politicians who had used democracy as a pretext for reaping personal benefits.

"They were similar to worms slowly eating the crops. When the vermin are removed, democracy would remain unchanged. I think the armed forces will allow a general election as soon as possible. Of course, there will be some negative effects from the coup, but there will be more positive ones," said Prasong.

Once former Prime Minister Gen Prem Tinsulanon's secretary general, Prasong was not a part of the Chatchai administration when it was formed more than two years ago. He wrote political commentaries for the NAEO NA daily newspaper, many of which were critical of the ousted coalition government.

Prasong said he believed that democracy in Thailand will be better served because the military institution would put an end to vote buying among politicians. However, he refused to comment when asked who would be the new prime minister.

"I have written many warnings in my columns with sincerity, hoping that those in power would correct themselves," he said, adding that those found to be corrupt would be punished. He declined further comment when asked about the controversial assassination plots against prominent public figures.

"I knew that there were attempts to cover up and distort the cases," he added, without elaborating.

ACM [Air Chief Marshal] Sitthi Sawetsila, the former foreign minister and leader of the Social Action Party, said he was not surprised by the military takeover. When asked about the justification, he said only that the situation was ripe. He expressed hope that the coup would improve Thailand's image in the international community.

Phisan Mulasatsathon, former permanent secretary of the Interior Ministry, gave support to the seizure of power. "I give full support, and hope that it serves as a turning point for the better. Many people I have talked to also approve of the move. There were complaints that the coup was quite slow in coming," he said.

But Chaloemphan Siwikon, a deputy prime minister in the ousted Chatchai administration, said the coup would frighten the public for a while, but the ongoing Gulf War is an important variable which is having a more negative impact on the country's economy.

"It was fortunate that no tanks rumbled along the city's streets. However, I want to see the promulgation of a Constitution so that we can have a quick general election. If the unsettled political situation continues it would not bode well for our economy," he pointed out.

But an academic, Dr Phaisan Suriyamongkhon, who was an adviser to ousted Deputy Interior Minister Watthana Atsawahem, said that it was highly inappropriate for the armed forces to seize control of the government. "It was a big step backward for democracy. This was most regrettable after we have been nursing the democratic system for more than 10 years. I think most academics would disagree with the coup."

He said the reasons cited by the military for the takeover were not justified at all. "It was an old story they used as an excuse. The military must have feared that key leaders would be dismissed and they just preempted the move through seizing power," he said.

The claim that the Chatchai administration had been riddled with corruption should have been substantiated and the evidence presented for due judicial processing. "They should not have demolished the system nourished by the public. Not only will their action devastate democracy, the country's economic system will be ruined as well," he commented.

He said the junta's statements were vague and failed to mention specifically when the armed forces would restore democracy, or when they would reorganize the political and economic system.

"This is an important point for the junta to attain recognition by major countries such as the Soviet Union, the United States, China and Japan, for example. The coup runs counter to the worldwide trend towards democracy," he added.

Academics: Civilian Government To Blame for Coup

BK2402022591 Bangkok BANGKOK POST in English 24 Feb 91 p 2

[Text] Some leading academics said Gen Chatchai Chunhawan's civilian Government pushed the military too far and is to blame for yesterday's coup d'etat, which they say was unavoidable.

Dean of Chulalongkon University's Political Science Faculty Dr Suchit Bunbongkan said the civilian administration pushed the military to the limit. The military's response was understandable.

But it was regrettable Thailand's democratic system, which had been developing without interruption for a fairly long period, had come to an abrupt halt, he said.

Dr Duchit said he had several times called on the Chatchai administration to make changes in the political system.

He had warned that if the Government failed to do so, it would face trouble and have to face the consequences of its failure to tackle the country's problems.

The political scientist said incidents of serious conflict between the military and civilian leadership had led to yesterday's seizure of power.

Dr Suchit said the appointment of Puangchon Chaothai Party leader and former Army chief Gen Athit Kamlang-ek as deputy defence minister was improper in timing.

The role of Muanchon Party leader Chaloem Yubamrung in the assassination attempt case was also inappropriate, he said.

Dr Suchit said Pol [Police] Capt Chaloem's plan to air on television videotaped testimonies of some suspects in the case, who are members of the Communist Party of Thailand, was unacceptable to the military.

The academic said the National Peacekeeping Council's second announcement, which outlined the reasons why the military leadership had seized power and made stong accusations against the Chatchai Government, was forceful but understandable.

Dr Suchit said he believed "the military did not want to do it but had no other choice."

He said the accusations in the second anouncement were rather one-sided and were unfair to those accused.

Political scientist Kramon Thongthammachat, also at Chulalongkon University, said the Government is to blame for the coup since it failed to clear up things until political manipulation got out of control.

He criticised the Chatchai Government for pressuring permanent officials and academics who were its critics.

Student Activist Urges Lifting of Martial Law

BK2502031791 Bangkok BANGKOK POST in English 25 Feb 91 p 2

[Excerpts] A student activist yesterday urged the National Peacekeeping Council to lift martial law—under which gatherings of five people or more are banned—if it is sincere in its invitation for students to participate in the political process.

Students Federation of Thailand Secretary-General Saowani Chitrun was speaking in response to the Council's statement issued earlier yesterday [passage omitted]

Ms Saowani said:

"We call for the lifting of the ban on gatherings and martial law. With them in place we will not be able to do anything. "It is violation of the human right of freedom of expression," she said.

She was worried some organised groups might claim to be student representatives as has occurred before, she said.

Editor-in-Chief Comments on Military Takeover

BK2402003191 Bangkok THE NATION in English 24 Feb 91 p A1

["Comment" by editor-in-chief Suthichai Yun: "The Power Belongs to the People, Nobody Else"]

[Text] Under no circumstances can we condone the toppling of an elected government by force. A bad government should stand and fall on its own. One could argue that the Chatchai government painted itself into a corner and the military leaders who decided to take things into their own hands yesterday might have overreacted.

We were naive enough to believe there actually were such things as anachronisms in Thai politics.

But the spectre of a military coup that haunted us these past few months has hit with startling reality. It is a serious blemish on our contemporary political history.

The Thai people have every right to blame both sides for having turned what basically was no more than a partisan power struggle, pure and simple, into a national crisis blown out of all proportion.

Yesterday's coup—which inevitably will inflict a deep scar on Thailand's image as a democratic nation—could have been avoided. The government and the military simply refused to explore available democratic options to head off the growing tension.

The people, as a result, have been caught in the crossfire again. The all-powerful National Peacekeeping Command [as published] dominated by the military must now demonstrate beyond doubt that it doesn't intend to cling on to power and that a definite time-frame for a national election to return power to the people must be announced without delay.

The coup leaders who have taken over the helm of the country out of their own choice must now address the very severe grievances cited as the reasons behind the power seizure.

The people expect the alleged "corrupt ministers" in the previous adminstration to be tried in court by the new government, under open and fair hearings.

The public has the right to know who was corrupt and how each of them will be punished.

All the accusations cited by the National Peacekeeping Command for ousting the government must be pursued in earnest. They are all serious, highly controversial and must be fully investigated.

But an open, comprehensive and fair scrutiny cannot possibly be carried out now that the new powers-that-be have issued Order No 14 imposing pre-publication censorship on the Press—a move which will certainly serve as the first major blow to the credibility of the new self-appointed administration.

Press censorship is usually associated with the lack of respect for the people's right to know and breeds a sense of insecurity, ending with authoritarianism.

The Thai people, having been plunged into a state of confusion following the series of damaging power tussles which culminated in yesterday's "broad day-light putsch" must be wondering just what's behind the attempts to keep the free flow of information bridled yet again. Are there things to hide from the public?

The imposition of press censorship by the new regime simply confirms that [illegible]. Or are we to believe that political power, absolute or not, has the same intoxicating effect on *everybody*, without exception, sooner or later?

Editorial Reminds Ruling Junta About Promises

BK2502041191 Bangkok THE NATION in English 25 Feb 91 p A13

[Editorial: "Don't Let People Down"]

[Text] Ousted Prime Minister Gen Chatchai Chunhawan obviously underestimated the military, thinking that the top brass would never attempt a coup. So he took the path of confrontation rather than compromise as he tried to exert control over the armed forces in the same way as he did with the bureaucracy and the police.

His appointment of Deputy Prime Minister Gen Athit Kamlang-ek—whom most military leaders strongly dislike—as deputy defence minister last Tuesday was obviously the last straw.

Ironically, Chatchai and Athit were seized in an Air Force C-130 transport, which was supposed to fly them to Chiang Mai for an audience with His Majesty the King. Athit was to attend a swearing-in ceremony at the Phuping Royal Palace on Doi Suthep in the northern province. They really didn't suspect that a coup was in the offing until it was too late to resist.

The military listed five major reasons to justify the coup, foremost of which was alleged rampant corruption in high places in the Chatchai administration. The fifth stated reason was the alleged attempt by the prime minister and his men to distort the investigation into the alleged assassination plots against a member of the Royal Family.

These two reasons, especially, stemmed chiefly from the failure of the Chatchai administration to use due processes of law to investigate serious charges against his men and other senior politicians. Moreover there was no credible counterbalance to the ruling administration. The Opposition failed miserably because most opposition leaders were more interested in jumping on the government's bandwagon than checking the government's actions. The about-face of the Solidarity Party last December was a case in point.

The only counterbalance to the politicians was the military. And on Saturday the military did what it felt it had to do, with force.

Knocking down the Chatchai administration was easy. But restoring normalcy and democratic parliamentary rule as soon as possible—as promised by the National Peacekeeping Command [as published] [NPC]—may not be so simple.

Since a new constitution will have to be drafted, this is a golden opportunity for Thailand to review all the past shortcomings of the political system and introduce new, appropriate measures to ensure a smoother functioning of the democratic parliamentary process. There must be, for example, constitutional entities, like a parliamentary ombudsman and election commission, to counterbalance elected politicians.

A free flow of information, particularly through an independent and responsible press, must also be promoted. In fact it was the free press that played a leading role in exposing corruption scandals in the Chatchai administration and questioning the prime minister's complacency.

In order to ensure an orderly return to normalcy and democracy, the National Peacekeeping Command will have to involve representatives from all walks of life in drafting the new constitution. The Thai people have long yearned for a genuine democracy, in which elected politicians truly serve the national interest and speak for the underprivileged.

The appointment of prominent civilians as advisers to the NPC is a welcome move. All those appointed as economic advisers are respectable figures whose professional expertise and personal integrity are recognized both at home and abroad. They will play a crucial role in restoring in Thai economy at this critical juncture when the global economy is bracing for adverse repercussions from the raging ground war in the Gulf.

The NPC leaders have emphasized that they don't intend to hold on to power longer than as is necessary to rebuild a "better" political system. This is certainly the right attitude. They have also promised to hold a general election in six months. This we take as a social contract that the NPC leaders must fulfil.

Its decisions to lift the strict press censorship initially announced and to let political parties stay as they are—although all political gatherings have been banned—are crucial steps in the right direction toward a speedy return to democracy. The next necessary move is to draft a new constitution, which we believe should be done by representatives from all walks of life in an open manner so that public input will be taken into consideration.

The NPC is in a position to give the people what they want: "a new beginning for a genuine democracy. It has the future of the country and the people in its hands. This is an extremely important responsibility and it must not fail [no end quotation as published].

It must bear in mind His Majesty the King's solemn advice: don't let the people down.

BANGKOK POST Comments on Military Coup

BK2402004791 Bangkok BANGKOK POST in English 24 Feb 91 p 1

["Page One Comment"]

[Text] Military takeovers anywhere in the world are bound to stir up a public debate on their pros and cons. The power seizure yesterday by the National Peacekeeping Council [NPC] is no exception. Opinions among the various sectors of the local populace will, understandably, vary. Such is the nature—and strength—of the pluralistic Thai society.

What is more important to the citizens of this country—as well as members of the international community which have a direct interest in the future political and economic wellbeing of Thailand—is what lies ahead.

In its very first public announcement, the NPC leadership pledged full allegiance to Their Majesties the King and Queen and other members of the revered Royal Family. The NPC also professed that one important aim of the takeover is to preserve the democratic system with His Majesty the King as head of state. There is no dispute that these are noble aims shared by the common Thai citizens.

The constitutional monarchy system has been widely accepted as best suited for Thailand. The preservation of this system is an important task which the NPC leadership will have to follow up with concrete action.

Granted that there may be various urgent matters requiring attention, the new leadership should give priority to working out a programme of action that would return the country to political and economic normalcy as soon as possible.

After all, it has been a combination of political maturity and economic dynamism that has made Thailand a successful model in the eyes of the developing world.

The new leadership can do the country a great service by coming out with a concrete programme of action over a reasonable time frame for the drafting and adoption of a new constitution so that general elections can be held, and the power to administer the country eventually returned to the people.

Editorial Reviews Tasks of Council After Coup

BK2502033391 Bangkok BANGKOK POST in English 25 Feb 91 p 4

[Editorial: "New Regime Must Get Priorities Right"]

[Text] Until the military takeover last Saturday, Thailand was still very much looked upon as the development showcase of Southeast Asia. The country had enjoyed an unprecedented period of impressive if unregulated economic growth and the political and social systems had become more liberalised, although many serious problems remained. But unfortunately, the nearly three years of experimentation with a fully elected civilian administration were brought to an abrupt halt as the government of former prime minister Chatchai Chunhawan was ousted in a power seizure by the self-proclaimed National Peacekeeping Council (NPC).

The country's premier status has now been called into question and it will have to start all over again to rebuild credibility in the eyes of the world. There are sections of the local community, such as businessmen who were wary and discouraged by the extent of corruption during the previous administratioin, that supported the coup. There were also democratically-minded intellectuals who criticised it. But one harsh reality remains: the long process of gradual democratisation during and since the era of the previous prime minister Prem Tinsulanon is now stalled—at least temporarily—and it will be a while before the process is put back on the road again.

Politicians in the previous administration partly have themselves to blame for causing a steady erosion in public faith through acts of corruption on a wide scale. But although this was cited by the ruling military council as one of the five main reasons to justify the coup, the NPC is still vulnerable to criticism that it has toppled a constitutionally-elected government. The ruling military councils' stated concerns about corruption and the previous government's alleged mishandling of the assassination plots and other serious offences may well be genuine, but the fate of the former government could have been left to be determined at the next polls.

Now that the affair has become a fait accompli, the immediate challenge facing the country is to get back to business as soon as possible. The pledge by the NPC leadership to draft a new constitution and hold general elections within six months is a promising start. Its decision to retain the status of political parties, though banning political activities and halting any registration of new parties, is also taken positively. But additional concrete measures are needed to regain domestic and foreign confidence.

First and foremost is a speedy decision on an economic policy programme to carry the country through until a post-election government. Stability, as against sheer growth, is clearly the preferred priority thrust at a time of a general economic slowdown in the west and volatility on other fronts as at present. It is comforting to see a number of economic experts with proven track records being named to the NPC's advisory committee, presumably to give advice that can be translated into concrete action rather than merely serving ceremonial roles.

The constitution-drafting process should also speedily get under way. While provisions to eliminate vote-buying—an area often emphasised by the NPC leadership—will be welcomed if they can be effectively implemented, the broad thrust of the new charter should be progressive rather than regressive. It goes without saying that the charter should guarantee the basic human rights, civil rights and liberty, and freedom of expression. Alongside the drafting process, due consideration should also be given to the lifting of martial law as and when the domestic situation returns to full normalcy. Martial law may or may not be used, but its very presence is like a stigma on this country in the eyes of the outside world.

Army chief and deputy leaders of the ruling council Gen Suchinda Khraprayun has stated that it might be inevitable for the country to suffer some temporary disruption but that a better democratic system that will emerge will bring about more satisfactory results in the longer run. These are pledges that he will have to prove with concrete action in the months to come.

Gen Suchinda will also have to prove that the exercise last weekend was not also aimed at furthering the interests of his military classmates, as has been suspected in several circles, but that his group can really make a difference and create a better future for this country.

Thai Dailies React, Report on Military Takeover

BK2402134891

[Editorial Report] On 24 February 1991, six Thai-language dailies SIAM RAT, THAI RAT, NAEO NA, MATICHON, BAN MUANG, and DAILY NEWS carry major news reports and comments on the military takeover of the national administrative power by the National Peacekeeping Council led by Supreme Commander General Sunthon Khongsomphong on 23 February 1991.

All six papers give full accounts of all the events relating to the takeover and reasons for the power seizure, as stated by the National Peacekeeping Council. The National Peacekeeping Council charges the Chatchai government as being corrupt, being a parliamentary dictatorship, destroying the military institution, and distorting the case of investigation into the attempted assassinations of major political figures and member of the royal family.

SIAM RAT's 7,000-word report on pages 1, 3, 15, and 16 highlights that the military takeover took place after Prime Minister General Chatchai Chunhawan was "arrested" while boarding an airplane to take General Athit Kamlang-ek to have an audience with his majesty the king in the northern province of Chiang Mai.

SIAM RAT also carries a 900-word report on pages 1 and 16 on an interview with Major General M.R. Khukrit Pramot, former prime minister and former leader of the Social Action Party on his comment on the military takeover. The 80-year-old remarked that the takeover would not cause democracy to "stumble" and that the reasons the military has claimed for the takeover sound "good enough." "Judging from news reports I tend to believe that politicians had interfered too much from government bureaucrats."

THAI RAT carries 10,000-word report on pages 1, 3, 10, and 22. The report says the military is still "hunting" for Major General Manun Rupkhachon, an alleged suspect in the failed assassination attempts against political leaders and royal family member some nine years ago and Police Captain Chaloem Yubamrung, a cause of conflict between the Chatchai government and the military.

In the report, Amnuai Wirawan, chairman of the National Economic and Social Development Board remarked that he could not predict about the impact of the incident on the Thai economy now but would have to wait and see what the new policy would be.

Prachuap Chaiyasan, deputy leader of the Democrat Party, commented that the incident is the most painful lesson of a lifetime for a politician.

NAEO NA's 600-word editorial entitled "The New Future" on page 4 points out that the 23 February military takeover is "inevitable and no accident." "Once again, the incident has put the country's democratic ruling system back to its origin. Many parties may have been disappointed or even desperate, but all sides have no other choice. They have to accept the reality although it is a painful one," the paper remarks. It says that over the past decade Thai people have enjoyed and are proud of the development of the democratic system with the king as head of state. This feeling can not be erased from the hearts of Thai people. The absolute seizure of power by any party would be undesirable for the Thai people. Therefore, they are now longing for a secure future while history is beginning a new chapter of our democratic system, the editorial concludes.

BAN MUANG's 500-word page 2 editorial entitled "Democracy of the People" notes that following the takeover, Thai people have concerns over the setback of the democratic system and are afraid that they may lose their existing rights and freedom.

"Most importantly, the National Peacekeeping Council must speedily return the administrative power, which in accordance with the democratic system belongs to the people, to the people as soon as possible," urges the paper.

More on Comment by Thai Dailies on Coup

BK2502142191

[Editorial Report] Four Thai-language dailies—SIAM RAT, THAI RAT, NAEO NA, and MATICHON—on 25 February carry editorials on the takeover of national administrative power by the National Peacekeeping Council on 23 February.

SIAM RAT's 650-word editorial on page 8, titled: "The Takeover of Power by the Military Junta," says the National Peacekeeping Council led by Supreme Commander General Sunthon Khongsomphong seized national administrative power last Saturday and announced the termination of the Constitution, the Senate, and the House of Representatives. The seizure of power by the National Peacekeeping Council was carried out easily. This is another bloodless coup in the history of Thailand's democratic system. The National Peacekeeping Council issued a communique explaining five major reasons for its takeover of power.

Concluding, the editorial says: "Although some may say that the use of force to seize power is not a way to solve problems in line with the democratic system, after listening to the people's opinions we must accept that most people are satisfied with and accept this change. The National Peacekeeping Council has received more sympathy than criticism since it voluntarily stepped in to help solve the problems. We hope the National Peacekeeping Council will carry out measures to restore a normal administrative system as soon as possible, as it has promised."

THAI RAT's 700-word editorial on page 3, titled: "It Happened at 1130," says the bloodless takeover of national administrative power by the National Peacekeeping Council, which consists of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Police, and civilians, is not the first in Thailand. This is the 18th seizure of power in the country's history. Only 10 of the 18 attempts have been successful.

The editorial says "the most important reason cited by the National Peacekeeping Council for taking over administrative power was to preserve the country's democratic system with the king as head of the state. It is believed that people hope that after the National Peacekeeping Council completes its immediate objectives, it will organize fair general elections as soon as possible."

NAEO NA's 650-word editorial on page 4, titled: "The People Who Decide the Future," says that not long ago people were all saying that military seizure of power was out-of-date and unacceptable in modern society. While people talked about this issue with sincerity, a group of people claimed these beautiful words for personal benefits by raising the fake democratic flag as a cover. And finally, it was those persons who caused the word "coup" to return to the country's political system.

The editorial says the people are disappointed by certain politicians who controlled the country's administrative power, and this is why the people believe that all the bad things will not return again during the new changes. All the people hate corruption and all kinds of dictatorships. The people have enough reasons to believe that the new government is leading our country in a more correct direction. All parties still have the chance to jointly solve the old problems and create good things. In fact, six months is not long and may be too short to create our new future.

Concluding, the editorial says: "The latest change in the country's administrative power is a challenge to all parties concerned. The future of Thailand does not depend on any particular group. The future is really in the people's hands."

MATICHON'S 700-word editorial on page 8, titled: "Abiding by Good Principles," says the seizure of power by the National Peacekeeping Council led by Supreme Commander General Sunthon Khongsomphong is another important historical event. The National Peacekeeping Council explained the reasons for its action following its takeover of power. The reasons point out the mistakes and faults of the previous government, faults which have been widely criticized by the people and members of parliament. So, it is necessary for the National Peacekeeping Council to prove those mistakes and faults to the people in order to show that the reasons given by the National Peacekeeping Council are not groundless accusations. After that, legal actions should be taken in line with the justice system to allow the other side to show the facts and prove themselves to the public. If they really committed serious mistakes and caused damage to the public, they cannot avoid responsibility and punishment.

The drafting of the new Constitution and new general elections within six months must be carried out as the National Peacekeeping Council has announced. Only by doing so will the military be accepted by the public as an institution that is not under the control or interference of a small group of people who are only seeking personal benefits, but that those in the military are willing to sacrifice themselves for the right and are ready to return power to the people as soon as possible.

"In addition, all the advisers who have been invited to help solve the country's problems, such as political, economic and social problems, must be given a chance to work freely for the sake of the public. They should be allowed to use their abilities to gain success in their duties. More important, it [the National Peacekeeping Council] should allow individual groups or organizations to scrutinize and criticize at a certain level, and it should be ready to listen to the opinions of the public as much as possible. This will show that the National Peacekeeping Council and the advisory teams have sacrificed both their physical and mental strength to establish well-being for the people and are also ready to be scrutinized, not just to enter the power circle for material power, admiration, and personal benefits."

Vietnam

Gulf War; Reactions to Iraqi-Soviet Agreement

Foreign Ministry Urges Quick End

BK2502102991 Hanoi International Service in English 1000 GMT 25 Feb 91

[Text] The Vietnamese Foreign Ministry on Monday released a statement expressing Vietnam's deep concern over the U.S. and some other countries' ground offensive on the territory of Iraq and Kuwait.

The statement noted that the offensive came right after Iraq had accepted the Soviet diplomatic initiative and declared that it would withdraw unconditionally from Kuwait and restore sovereignty of that country in accordance with Resolution 660 of the UN Security Council. The statement pointed out that the ground war has worried the world due to the U.S. and some other countries going beyond the objectives of the UN Security Council resolution. The ground war has also raised doubts about the real intentions of the United States in the Gulf War. This offensive has undermined efforts for a peaceful settlement of the Gulf crisis. The statement asserted that the Vietnamese Government and people demanded an immediate end to the war and called for a negotiated settlement. It maintained that the UN should accomplish its responsibility in preserving peace and security and not letting any country escalate the war and undermine peace in the name of the United Nations.

NHAN DAN Comments

BK2502075591 Hanoi VNA in English 0715 GMT 25 Feb 91

[Text] Hanoi VNA Feb. 25—"The fact that the U.S.-led ground attack on Iraq was still launched in spite of Iraq's openly accepting withdrawal from Kuwait proves that the Gulf war is not only aimed at liberating Kuwait," says the leading Hanoi paper NHAN DAN in a commentary today.

NHAN DAN says:

"The plan agreed upon by the Soviet Union and Iraq has been welcomed worldwide as a positive and goodwill initiative. But it is regrettable that the United States dictated its own conditions to be implemented almost instantly, giving Iraq no chance to negotiate. This shows that the United States and its allies have already opted for war and not for a peace solution."

"It is not acceptable to broad public in the world that the Gulf war has been and is being conducted beyond the resolution of the United Nations Security Council. The United States and its allies can not identify themselves with the world community as well as the United Nations."

The paper points out, concludes:

"Once again, Vietam strongly demands an end to the Gulf war. The efforts in this direction of various parties, including the UN Security Council, are still very necessary and should be continued."

Foreign Ministry Spokesman Comments

BK2302154091 Hanoi Domestic Service in Vietnamese 1430 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Text] Answering VIETNAM NEWS AGENCY on Vietnam's attitude toward the agreement reached by the Soviet Union and Iraq on 22 February, our Foreign Ministry spokesman said: Vietnam welcomes the 22 February agreement between the Soviet Union and Iraq and considers it an important initiative aimed at ending the war at an early date and restoring peace in the region in response to the wish of the peoples of various countries in the region and the world over. Vietnam hopes that the sides concerned will put an immediate end to the hostilities and restore peace soon for the peoples of Iraq, Kuwait, and other countries in the region.

Workers Confederation Urges Peace

BK2502094991 Hanoi Domestic Service in Vietnamese 1430 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Statement issued by the Confederation of Vietnamese Workers "on the situation in the Persian Gulf"; dated 23 February]

[Text] The war in the Persian Gulf is continuing. The most serious fact is that it may shift to the bloody phase of a ground offensive in which the use of mass destruction weapons cannot be ruled out. A wave of antiwar activities is steadily rising throughout the planet. On 18 February, the Soviet Union put forth a peace plan aimed at ending the war and solving the crisis in the Gulf region. The Iraqi side has also made new efforts and initiatives. Public opinion is focusing on solutions and initiatives designed to bring about a cease-fire and peace in the region.

In view of the increasingly atrocious, barbarous, and inhuman nature of the hostilities, the Confederation of Vietnamese Workers and people of Vietnam appeal to the governments of all nations, international organizations, trade unions in various countries, and all workers the world over to act vigorously in support of the peace initiatives of some countries and international organizations and the Soviet peace plan to solve the Gulf crisis, to achieve a cease-fire, and to end the war in the interests of the peoples in the Gulf region and the rest of the world.

'Last Group' of Workers Leaves

BK2402010091 Hanoi VNA in English 1553 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Text] Hanoi VNA February 23—The last group of Vietnamese guest workers totalling 92 people including three woman nurses left Iraq on February 22 [for] Iran en route home.

According to the Vietnamese Embassy in Iraq, all the 16,000 Vietnamese guest workers in Iraq have safely left the host country for home. A major part of them have already been back to Vietnam whereas the rest are about to repatriate in the coming days.

Shift in Communist Party Foreign Policy Reported

OW2202123291 Tokyo KYODO in English 1200 GMT 22 Feb 91

[Text] Hanoi, Feb. 22 KYODO—The Vietnamese Communist Party has shifted its foreign policy, moving from a one-sided pro-Soviet stance to an all-round diplomacy with ties with the United States and other Western powers as well, according to a party document obtained Friday by KYODO NEWS SERVICE. The draft political report, which sets party tasks for the 1991-95 period, also calls for the development of heavy industry and a quick expansion of oil and gas production.

"The developments in the Soviet Union, Western Europe, and the Gulf war have brought changes in our export and import markets, in cooperation programs and agreements on labor," according to an unofficial translation of the document. "Our country's external relations are strengthening and developing and relations with a number of countries have recently seen improvements and prospects for gradual normalization have been opened," the document said.

Vietnam will continue to strengthen relations with the Soviet Union, Laos, and Cambodia, and promote the normalization of relations with China, it said. Vietnam will settle remaining problems with China through peaceful negotiations, it said. The document said Vietnam will also seek better relations with Southeast Asian countries on the basis of peace, neutrality, and cooperation.

For the first time the name of the United States is raised as a country with which the process of normalization of relations is to be promoted.

Hanoi will broaden relations with Scandinavia and Western Europe and Japan and contribute to making the United Nations effectively serve peace, cooperation, and development, it said.

As for economic policy, the country will make efforts to stabilize and develop the efficiency of social production and improve the people's livelihood, it said.

The document said the country aims at quickly increasing oil and gas output but does not give specific figures. Informed sources said Vietnam produced 2.6 million tons of oil in 1990 and aims at producing 3.7 million tons in 1991. Vietnam plans to produce 10 million tons of oil annually by 1995 and to become a member of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), the sources said.

Soviet Army-Navy Day Commemorated

BK2502101891 Hanoi Vietnamese Television Network in Vietnamese 1200 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Text] On 21 February, the Air Defense Force Command held a grand meeting to mark the 73d Soviet Army and Navy Day, 23 February 1918-23 February 1991. Attending were the Soviet military attache and other cadres of the Soviet embassy in Hanoi, and representatives of the External Relations Department of the Defense Ministry.

On behalf of the cadres and combatants of the Vietnam People's Army and the Air Defense Force, Lieutenant General Tran Nhan, commander of the Air Defense Force, read a statement greeting the glorious anniversary of the Soviet armed forces, a reliable contingent that has defended peace, socialism, and the Soviet state for more than 70 years. He also stressed the militant solidarity and multilateral cooperation between the peoples and armed forces of the two countries which have ceaselessly consolidated and developed in the new situation.

Speaking at the meeting, Colonel Lytchak, Soviet Army and Naval attache, recalled the glorious tradition of the Soviet armed forces and stressed the resolve of the Soviet Army and Navy to remain forever a reliable force to defend the Soviet state, the restructuring processing, and the fruits of the Great October Revolution.

Le Duc Anh Greets Defense Minister Yazov

BK2302151791 Hanoi Domestic Service in Vietnamese 1430 GMT 21 Feb 91

[Text] On the occasion of the 73d Soviet Army and Navy Day, 23 February 1918-23 February 1991, on 20 February 1991 Vietnamese Defense Minister General Le Duc Anh sent a message of greetings to Marshal of the Soviet Union Yazov, Minister of Defense of the USSR.

Doan Khue Attends Army-Navy Day Function

BK2302152591 Hanoi VNA in English 1510 GMT 23 Feb 91

[Text] Hanoi VNA February 23—Military Attache of the Soviet Embassy in Vietnam Colonel N.V. Lytchak [name as received] gave a reception here yesterday afternoon in honour of the 73rd anniversary of the Soviet Army and Navy (February 23).

His Vietnamese guests included General Doan Khue, member of the Politburo of the Communist Party of Vietnam, vice minister of defence and chief of the General Staff of the Vietnam People's Army; Trinh Ngoc Thai, deputy head of the Party Central Committee's External Relation Commission; and Le Mai, deputy foreign minister.

General Doan Khue and Colonel N.V. Lytchak and others raised toasts to achievements of the Soviet Army and Navy over the past decades and further development of the solidarity, friendship and cooperation between [illegible] peoples and armies of the two countries.

On this occasion, a meeting has been held by the Anti-Aircraft Force of the Vietnamese Army with the participation of Attache N.V. Lytchak and other members of the Soviet embassy here.

Recent Events in Baltic Republics Reviewed

BK2302125391 Hanoi International Service in English 1000 GMT 22 Feb 91

["Station editor's review of recent events in the Baltic Republics"]

[Text] At present in Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia there remains opposition against the Soviet constitution and continued refusal to execute the presidential decrees on these countries. From time to time, incidents occur, including maltreatment of communists, human rights violations, and public disorders. In a statement dated January 31, the Central Committee and the Control Committee of the CPSU Central Committee noted that the socioeconomic crisis in the Soviet Union has reached a dangerous point.

Despite the decision made by First Congress of the Soviet People's Deputies and President Gorbachev's decree on holding a referendum on the future of the USSR on 17 March, Lithuania on 9 February conducted a separate referendum on the future of the republic. The Supreme Control Organ of Lithuania went to the length of prosecuting Mr. Jermalavicius, a senior officer of the Lithuanian Communist Party Central Committee, on the alleged charge of sabotaging the sovereignty of the Lithunian state and attempting to overthrow the local government by force. The alleged charge was denied by the Central Bureau of the Lithuanian Communist Party as an attempt to put the blame on the Lithuanian Communist Party for the recent killings in that republic.

In Latvia, representatives of the republic's Supreme Soviet told newsmen that they will boycott the 17 March referendum. The leaderhip of Latvia also intend to set up the republic's monetary system. A similar note has been sounded in Estonia where local government officials reaffirmed that there will be a separate referendum for the republic on 3 March. They argued that the maintenance of the Soviet Union as a unified state does not concern Estonia.

Broad sections of public opinion are concerned about the fact that the United States and the West as a whole are using developments in the three republics as conditions for relations with the Soviet Union. In a talk with a delegation of American congressmen after their trip to the Baltic republics, the chairman of the Institute of Nationalities of the Supreme Soviet, Mr. Anisimov, said that the internationalization of events in the Baltic region is complicating the process of solving the situation there. While denouncing all attempts to impose a solution from outside, the Soviet official asserted that the three republics belong to the Soviet entity and that the Soviet constitution takes effect in the territories of these three republics. Speaking at a press conference in Moscow, Mr. (Vitrorenkin), the head of the Soviet Foreign Minister's Press Department, noted that the recent statement by the Icelandic foreign minister is characterized by political prejudice, inconsistent with the friendly relations between the two countries, and running counter to the common line of the Paris Summit in November 1990 for the building of new qualitative ties among the European countries. The same Soviet official said that the controversy between the Baltic republics and the Soviet leadership could not be based on international law. He denounced the UN for attempting to meddle in the Soviet internal afairs, describing it as groundless and to be taken into account when necessary. He noted that they will act in response in the future.

Summary of Ideas, Suggestions for Draft Platform

BK2002133791 Hanoi QUAN DOI NHAN DAN in Vietnamese 24 Jan 91 pp 1, 4

[Article by Trung Tin: "National Defense and the Army in the Transition Period" published under the rubric "Contributing Views to the Draft Documents of the Seventh Party Congress"]

[Text] Broad segments of public opinion in and outside the Army have shown keen interest in the issue of national defense and the Army raised in the draft platform on socialist construction in the transition period. The Army paper QUAN DOI NHAN DAN has received and published many articles by different individuals and collectives reflecting their diversified and vivid views on national defense and the Army. Of late, our editorial staff has received more and more views on this issue. Of course, many of those articles have many things in common in terms of points of view, analytical methods, and even concrete details. Therefore, we cannot publish all of the views we have received. In this article, we will make a summary of new ideas contributed to the issue of national defense and the Army raised in the draft platform.

The first question is as follows: Should national defense, security, and foreign policy be included in the same chapter? There are two different views here. Comrade Ngo Minh Man, deputy director of the Dong Nai Military School, and some other cadres suggested that the issue of national defense and security should be included in a separate chapter. According to Comrade Ngo Minh Man, national construction always goes hand in hand with national defense and the same is true with socialist construction and the defense of the socialist fatherland. These traits mark our national traditions and the characteristics of our history as well as the common law governing the Vietnamese Revolution. In the course of the advance to socialism, our country has had to constantly cope with many hostile, opportunistic, and reactionary forces in and outside the country. The enemy has regarded Vietnam as one of the key objectives of his overall anti-socialist strategy. National defense, development of an all-people national defense system and a people's army, and national security protection are of special importance because they enable our country to stand ready to cope with all enemies under all circumstances. Positive, tight, constant, and uniform measures must be taken to carry out these strategically important tasks throughout the transition period. Therefore, there must be a separate chapter with specific contents, standpoints, and details to deal with national defense and security, and to demonstrate more clearly the strategic importance of this issue.

Unlike Comrade Ngo Minh Man, Colonel Vu Huy Ban from the Ha Nam Ninh Province Military Command maintained that the inclusion of national defense, security, and foreign policy into one chapter is proof of the party's flexibility in handling national affairs in the new situation. National defense, security, and foreign policy all belong to a political system designed to fulfill a common objective, namely building and defending the fatherland.

In an article entitled "Why Only One Objective for Two Strategic Tasks?" Comrade Colonel Le Hoe raised the following issue: Chapter Two of the draft platform says that "building socialism and defending the socialist fatherland are two strategic tasks of the Vietnamese Revolution," and that "the socialist society that our people are building is a society in which man is liberated; the laboring people are masters of the nation..." Thus, the strategic objective of the strategic task of building socialism has been clearly defined. Meanwhile, not a single word of Chapters Two and Three has been used to define the strategic objective of the strategic task of defending the fatherland. Only point one of Chapter Four contains a short phrase "consolidate the all-people national defense." Thus, there has been no definition of the all-people national defense, even a basic one. The author stressed: It is necessary to realize the fact that the tradition of all people participating in national defense has existed for a very long time now and that since the wars of resistance against France and the United States, that tradition has continued being developed and enriched with every passing day. After making an accurate analysis of the characteristics of our current all-people national defense system and the various factors contributing to the development of that system, the author affirmed: As far as national defense is concerned, the people's army is always regarded as the key element of the people's war to defend the fatherland.

One of the issues arousing interest and igniting heated debate among many people is "the quality of troops." In an article written by Comrade Tran Dau (of the Political Department of the 7th Military Region) entitled "Build the People's Armed Forces To Be Fit for its Position in National Defense," the author depicted many discussions held by various organizations such as collectives, public organs, and other military and civilian units in the area under the 7th Military Region to contribute views on the party's draft platform. Dealing with the "quality of troops," he said: In Part One—on National Defense Tasks—of Chapter Four, the draft platform affirms that "the decisive strength lies in the troops' ever-improving quality." The platform, however, falls short of clearly specifying how to achieve "troops' ever-improving quality." The party chapters of the Organ of Control and of the Museum of the 7th Military Region collectively suggested that the platform be supplemented with this passage: "Build the people's armed forces in the direction of standardization and modernization for use as a backbone force for implementing the two strategic tasks." For its part, the 302d Division suggested adding the following passage: "In building an all-people national defense, it is necessary to build the people's armed forces into a backbone regular force with a high fighting spirit capable of handling all contingencies."

It is further noted that many similar views were expressed during discussions on the significance of the sentence, "The decisive strength lies in "troops' ever-improving quality." Almost all the speakers suggested adding this phrase: It is necessary to come up with a plan for building a regular, elite, and seasoned people's armed forces capable of simultaneouly developing the quintessence of the country's traditional military art and adjusting itself to the country's existing conditions. Some comrades discussed this matter in a relatively profound fashion. They argued: As the decisive strength lies in the troops' ever-improving quality, we should elaborate on the character of the decisive strength, asking if this strength has an effect on the entire national defense system or only on the fulfillment of functions and duties of the armed forces itself. To answer this question, it should be noted that a strong national defense should always be accompanied by a strong armed force. Conversely, an armed force, however strong, cannot alone represent nor can it singlehandedly create a strong national defense. The people's war for national liberation and defense has been carried out by our country on the firm basis of the "all people fight the enemy" movement with the armed forces at the core. It is understandable that the armed forces, as a backbone regular army, should be of high quality and well-trained. Even under the present peace-time conditions, the quality of the armed forces should be regarded as a current topic to which constant attention should be paid by the party and the people. Together with the armed forces itself, soldiers's families and the entire people should contribute to maintaining the armed forces and improving it qualitatively.

Comrade Luong Van Bai (an outstanding instructor at the Politico-Military Officers Training School) had this to say about the quality of the Army: The draft platform mentions the need to "build a people's Army with an increasingly improved quality." We deem it necessary to add the phrase "and a proper numerical strength" to help everyone understand more clearly the party's concept that in addition to high quality, the Army must posses an appropriate numerical strength to fulfill its tasks. The phrase "appropriate numerical strength" also means the need to define an adequate ratio between the militia and self-defense forces and the main forces and regional forces, between the standing Army and the reserve forces, and between the different armed branches and services.

Broad segments of public opinion in and outside the Army have also shown keen interest in the need to care for the living conditions of members of the armed forces, to ensure the material and spiritual life of cadres and soldiers, and to adopt appropriate policies toward officers and men and the Army's rear. Most of the views suggested that the term "appropriate policies" be replaced with the term "policies of preferential treatment" and that the phrase "so that they may set their minds at ease while participating in Army-building activities!" be added to the whole sentence. Others preferred to use neither the term "appropriate policies" nor the term "policies of preferential treatment." Instead, they suggested a different rendering as follows: "It is necessary to effectively ensure the material and spiritual life of officers and men and to adopt a special ("special" instead of "appropriate") policy toward members of the armed forces and the Army's rear in such a way as to suit their special work assignment in society. As far as the details of that special policy is concerned, they will be secured by law. This is proof of social justice and not a "privilege" for the Army because members of the Vietnam People's Army have always remained loyal to the ideals set by the party and have unselfishly fought for the fatherland's independence and freedom, the success of socialism, and the people's happiness as correctly assessed by the platform when it stresses that the sacrifices of our armed forces are extremely great and should be remembered forever by the Vietnamese people of various generations.

Fully understanding the importance of the national defense issue raised in the draft platform, First Military Region Commander Lieutenant General Dam Van Nguy and other leading cadres and unit leaders have clearly defined their responsibility toward the education and training of men under their charge. As concrete objectives, measures must be taken to ensure firm political and ideological backgrounds, a high sense of discipline, good training results, readiness to meet all requirements under all circumstances, good maintenance of weapons, close coordination between national defense and economic development, and enhancement of the unity and attachment between the Army and the people as well as compatriots of different ethnic groups to create an aggregate strength on the political, military, and socioeconomic fronts. It is particularly important for leaders and commanders in charge of various echelons to attach importance to the formation of the contingent of replacement officers and to see to it that men under their charge stay healthy through good feeding thanks to their units' personal efforts and state supplies.

VNA Details Economic, Industrial Output

BK2202155691 Hanoi VNA in English 1458 GMT 22 Feb 91

[Text] Hanoi VNA Feb 22—In 1990 the value of industrial output of Hanoi, the Vietnamese capital, inceased by 3.2 per cent compared with the previous year while that of the non-governmental sector decreased by 2.6 per cent, accordimg to a report at a recent meeting of the Hanoi People's Council. Food output reached 93.8 per cent of the 1989 level. The output of livestock breeding and industrial crops such as mulberry and tobacco was also higher than in 1989.

In 1991, the first year of the five-year plan [words indistinct] the city plans to increase the output value of industry, small industry and handicrafts by 4 per cent food output by 4.4 per cent and vegetables by 3.3 percent compared with 1990.

The export value of Hanoi including tourism and other services is set at 204.30 million US dollars, up by 23 per cent compared with 1990.

By broadening the multi-sector economy and developing the production of traditional export goods, tourism and services, the city hopes to provide jobs for 14,500 people this year. Hanoi will also strive further to cut down the birth rate to 1.75 per cent (in 1990: 2 per cent) so that the city's population might be kept at 3,115,000 people by the end of 1991.

Australia

Hawke Outlines Reasons for Ground Offensive

BK2402073191 Melbourne Overseas Service in English 0500 GMT 24 Feb 91

[Text] The Australian prime minister, Mr. Hawke, whose government has provided warships in support of the coalition forces in the Gulf, has outlined the reasons for Australia's backing of the ground offensive:

[Begin Hawke recording] There is wide agreement in the Security Council that the fundamental flaw in the latest Soviet proposal is a requirement that all the United Nations resolutions relating to the Gulf crisis be rescinded after an Iraqi withdrawal. That would encompass, among other things, rescinding the resolutions relating to the restoration of Kuwait's legitimate government and the recision by Iraq of its purported annexation of Kuwait. Clearly these are quite fundamental issues, which go to the heart of the Gulf crisis and on which the United Nations is absolutely right not to compromise. [end recording]

In his statement, Mr. Hawke emphasized the refusal on Iraq's president, Saddam Husayn, to undertake an unconditional withdrawal of his forces from Kuwait:

[Begin Hawke recording] For this reason the United States, in consultation with the coalition partners most closely involved in a ground war, set the deadline which expired this morning. We believe that the coalition has been right to set this deadline. Iraq's actions have shown that it has not been serious about withdrawing from Kuwait in accordance with United Nations resolutions. Verbally the Soviets have indicated that they do not believe that Iraq is prepared to abandon its demand that all United Nations resolutions be rescinded. In other words, Saddam Husayn is not prepared to withdraw from Kuwait unconditionally. [end recording]

Defense Department: No Change in Navy Gulf Role

BK2502074091 Melbourne Overseas Service in English 0500 GMT 25 Feb 91

[Text] The Australian Defense Department says there has been no change in the role of the Australian ships in the Gulf since the ground war began. But Camille Fernell reports the ships are prepared to take more active role if necessary.

[Begin Fernell recording] The destroyer Brisbane is now in the northern Gulf area after spending most of last week in the central region conducting anti-aircraft warning support. The Sydney is also in the north on standby for search-and-rescue activities, while the Westralia is further south.

A defense spokesman says the Brisbane is better fitted to take part in any increased role. It has automatic rapid fire 5-inch guns and can fire shells over a distance of more than 15 kilometers. It is considered well able to supply naval gunfire support, although at this stage it has not been called on to undertake those duties. [end recording]

Hawke 'Under No Pressure' To Boost Commitments

BK2502073091 Melbourne Overseas Service in English 0500 GMT 25 Feb 91

[Text] The prime minister, Mr. Hawke, says he has received confirmation that the ground offensive in the Gulf is progressing very well. Speaking in Sydney, where he was officially opening the Navy's new maritime headquarters, Mr. Hawke says he is under no pressure to boost Australia's commitments to the Armed Forces in the Gulf.

[Begin Hawke recording] From the information that I have been given this morning before I came here, it does appear that all the reports of success are well founded and, if anything, the ground offensive is going even better than was expected. [end recording]

Government 'Deeply Regrets' Thai Military Coup

BK2402051891 Hong Kong AFP in English 0516 GMT 24 Feb 91

[Text] Sydney, Feb 24 (AFP)—Australia expressed its deep regret Sunday over the military coup that toppled the government of Thai Prime Minister Chatchai Chunhawan on Saturday.

"The Australian Government deeply regrets the seizure of power from the democratically elected Government of Thailand and calls for an early return to democratic government," Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans said.

"The government also looks to the military authorities for the full observation of human rights while the process of a return to democratic rule takes place. [no end quotation marks as received]

Australia and Thailand have generally enjoyed cordial relations but they have warmed significantly in the past three years under the administrations of Prime Ministers Chatchai and Bob Hawke.

Last August Prime Minister Chatchai signed a major economic agreement on recognising reciprocal "most favoured nation" trade status with Australia and non-discriminatory treatment of businesses during a visit here at Mr. Hawke's invitation.

Mr. Evans said the Australian Government "is concerned about the security of Prime Minister Chatchai, his family and other members of his elected government and looks to an assurance of their continued safety."

There was no evidence of any threat to Australians in Thailand, but the Australian Government is monitoring the situation closely, he added. About 5,000 Australians, including tourists, are on average in Thailand at any given time.

The close links between Australia and Thailand have been reflected in a major push by the governments and the commercial sectors to boost reciprocal trade to more than double the 1987-88 levels with a goal of 1.3 billion Australian dollars (1.02 billion U.S.) by 1991. In the 1989-90 financial year, trade between the two nations stood at 1.04 billion Australian dollars (820 million U.S.).

One of the major aid agreements reached between Mr. Chatchai and Mr. Hawke was the construction of a bridge over the Mekong River, joining Thailand and Laos.

The government was expected to issue a statement about future links with Thailand once the situation there is clearer.

Fiji

Miners' Union Criticizes "Appalling" Conditions

BK2502073191 Hong Kong AFP in English 0525 GMT 25 Feb 91

[Text] Suva, Feb 25 (AFP)—The Brussels-based Miners International Federation joined local pressure groups here Monday in criticising what they claimed to be "appalling" housing and safety standards at Fiji's Australian-run gold mines.

The federation's General-Secretary Peter Michalzik accused the Emperor Gold Mining Company of eroding conditions for 1,200 workers at Vatukoula mines on the west coast of Fiji's main island, Viti Levu. He claimed they were underpaid by comparison with mine workers in neighbouring Papua New Guinea.

Mr. Michalzik, visiting Fiji on an overseas tour of miners' unions, said he would report to his Brussels headquarters on the conditions here and failure by the firm to recognise the workers' trade union. "The federation is doubtful if internationally accepted conditions are being followed at Vatukoula Mine," Mr. Michalzik said after a weekend inspection of miners' conditions. "The conclusion I draw is that there is a lot of improvement needed to accommodation, food, safety equipment, wages and other conditions for the mine workers.

"They (management) cannot run a mine without recognising the miners' union and maintaining close relations with the miners' community."

Fiji Mine Workers Union General Secretary Kavekini Navuso said Mr. Michalzik's visit followed complaints about the conditions of his members. "We have been trying for improvement in the appalling conditions which our members have been forced to live with for so many years," said Mr. Navuso.

Fiji's Army Commander Major-General Sitiveni Rabuka, who led two military coups here in 1987, met the miners three weeks ago and said he sympathised with their grievances.

Fiji's main opposition party, the National Federation Party-Fiji Labour Party coalition, and the Trades Union Congress has often questioned the lack of government response to address the plight of miners at Vatukoula.

No comment was immediately available from the company Monday. It said at the weekend it would only recognise the union if it had the support of more than 50 per cent of the workforce, which it does not have at the moment.

Mined in Fiji since the 1930s, gold is a major export earner, behind sugar, garments and tourism. Fiji earned 68.5 million dollars (48.6 million U.S.) from sales of 3,769 kilograms (8,292 pounds) of gold in 1990.

Papua New Guinea

Red Cross To Provide Supplies For Bougainville

BK2502071391 Melbourne Overseas Service in English 0500 GMT 25 Feb 91

[Text] The Papua New Guinea Government has allowed Red Cross International to provide medical supplies for the people of Bougainville. The permission was granted despite a refusal by the secessionist Bougainville Revolutionary Army [BRA] to accept the government's services.

The minister for provincial affairs and member for Bougainville, Father John Momis, gave the approval following a request from a Red Cross representative. The representative, Dr. Neville Henry, told Papua New Guinea's National Broadcasting Commission that the Red Cross plans to take in medical supplies to the island tomorrow on a chartered plane.

Meanwhile, the government is to review the requirements of food on the island before the next shipment of food reaches the Bougainville port of Kieta. Prime minister Rabbie Namaliu has queried the need for food following the turning away of a shipment last week by the BRA.